

THE
WEAKNESS
OF
Human Understanding.

By the late Mr. H U E T,
Ancient Bishop of *Auranche*.

Translated from the FRENCH,
By EDW. COMBE, A. B. of *Mer. Coll. Oxon.*

*'Tis of great Use to the Sailor to know the Length of
his Line, though he cannot with it fathom all the
Depths of the Ocean,*

Mr. Lock's Introduction to his Essay of human Understanding.

L O N D O N:
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M DCC XXV.

THE

WEAKNESS

OF

ADULTS

AND

CHILDREN

BY

J. C. G. G. G.

OF

THE

UNIVERSITY

OF

THE

STATE

OF

THE

UNIVERSITY



To the Right Honourable

T H O M A S,

Lord PARKER,

Earl of *Macklesfield*, Lord High
Chancellor of *Great-Britain*; &c.

My LORD,



THE following Differ-
tation of a Prelate,
when living not un-
deservedly esteem'd one of
the most learned in *Europe* of

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the

the Present Age, could not certainly have been submitted to a more consummate Judge, and generous Patron, of all useful Science, than Your Lordship.

There are many Testimonies of the Worth of other Works of the famous Mr. *Huet*, and the Merit of this; but I must not by forgetting the Respects due to the Dignity of Your Person, and high Station, incur the least Hazard of being guilty of any Impertinence.

And only beg Leave to add, that the *Pyrrhonian* Epoche,

DEDICATION.

poche, and *Academick* Doctrine of the Art of doubting, abused by affected Ignorance, profane Prevarication, and libertine Pretences of Impiety, is here fully explained, if not established; to improve Philosophy, confirm Religion, and promote Obedience to human Laws: or I should not have presumed to lay it, in the *English* Idiom, at the Feet of the most excellent Guardian of sacred Equity, and rightful Order, that ever adorned that weighty Province: and in which the longer You shall

DEDICATION.

be continued to shine, the more Glory You will reflect on the great Prince, who has so much Regard to the Welfare and Happiness of his Subjects.

I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's

most Obedient

Humble Servant,

Merton Coll.

Oxon, 1724.

Edw. Combe.



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HIS Present I make to the Publick would have appeared some Time ago, if the illustrious Author who composed it, had been willing to let it see the Light. He was so apprehensive his Sentiments of the Weakness of human Understanding would be disliked by the Generality, that he could not prevail with Himself to publish it during his Life. He was satisfied with reading this Work to his best Friends, and not expose Himself to the Resentment

of those, be often called the Vulgar of the Republick of Learning.

A very worthy Person for whom the late Mr. Huet had much Respect, recommended this Work to Me, many Years before the Decease of that learned Prelate. He tried in vain to procure me a Copy; Mr. Huet would not consent, though he looked upon it as the best of all his Productions. Nothing more shews the Esteem he had for it, than the Care he took to turn it into Latin, after he had composed it in French, which he did not do for any other of his Books. I have the Latin Version by me, and may publish it hereafter if desired. All the World knows that this Prelate had cultivated Latin with extraordinary Application, and writ in that Language with as much Elegance.

After Mr. Huet's Death, one of his Relations to whom he entrusted his Manuscript, was pleased to favour me
with

with it, that the Publick might be no longer deprived of this excellent Treatise. But whereas it may be questioned by some whether the Author of the *Demonstratio Evangelica*, was likewise the Author of a Work wherein Pyrrhonism is so strenuously established, it will be proper to declare here, that the latter is faithfully printed from the original Manuscript of Mr. Huet, which I keep with Care, and am ready to produce to those who shall have the Curiosity to examine it. I can the more easily verify, that the Manuscript is of the Prelate's own Hand, because I have many Letters of his writing with which he was pleased to honour me.

I have made no Alteration in it, but by placing the Name of Mr. Huet, in the Room of the supposed Name of Theocritus of Pluvignack, Lord of Roch, Gentleman of Perigord, under which he was for concealing Himself.

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self. Those who love to know the true Authors of Books, will not be displeased with me for this Alteration.

The Work I publish was not unknown to the Editor of the Huetiana, which has lately appeared. For he informs us that the Philosophical Treatise of the Weakness of human Understanding was composed by Mr. Huet, at the same Time as his Quæstiones Alnetanæ, which appeared at Caen in 1609.

Some have desired to see here the historical Elogy of this Prelate; Mr. the Abbot d' Olivet, known by his fine Translation of Cicero's Discourses of the Nature of the Gods, is the Author of it.

I shall conclude with a Remark which will please the Readers, viz. that the provincial Philosopher, whose Person is borrowed by Mr. Huet, is the same Mr. Cormisy, which he mentions in the Memoirs of his own Life.
That

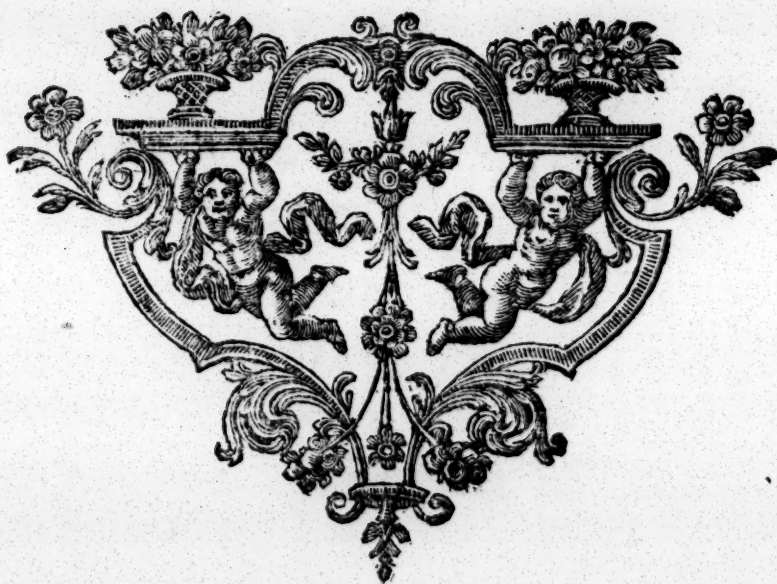
That illustrious Scholar was President of the Parliament of Aix in Provence, and banished to Caen by Order of the Court. There that Magistrate became acquainted with Mr. Huet, and gave him a Taste for Sextus Empiricus, and the Philosophy of the Scepticks. The Place where the Prelate speaks of Mr. Cormisy, is at Page 229 of his Memoirs.

Cadomum delatus est per eos Dies Vir literatus & priscae potissimum Philosophiae bene peritus, sed & Morum praeterea Comitatus amabilis, omnique Elegantia excultus, Senatus Aguenfis, Praeses Cormisius, illuc reflantis Fortunae Invidia & Regis Jussu relegatus. Attulit ille ad me Litteras commendatitias ab illustri Femina Catharina Vivonae Rambullieta, jam superius commemorata, quibus Viri praedicabat Laudes, meque enixe rogabat, si quomodo Hominis sublevare possem

Infor-

Infortunium, aut consolando, Patriæque Desiderium Dictis leniendo aut Afflictum Rebus ipsis juvando & assidua Consuetudine recreando, his Officiis ne deessem. Ad id autem etsi me satis impellebat ipsa Humanitas, multo tamen magis movebar ipsius Eruditione & Virtute, vel ex primo Congressu cognita. Frequens itaque illi aderam; nec ullus effluebat Dies, quin aut ille ventitaret ad me, aut illum ego convenirem, simulque vel per amænissimas Olenæ Ripas, vel per viridissima Prata deambularem. Omnis enim ferè Sermo erat de veterum Philosophorum Sectis; quarum omnium cum egregiè sciens erat, tum earum præcipuè, quæ Animum jubent ab omni Assensu sustinere. Summopere itaque comprobabat Sexti Empirici Doctrinam, effecitque Commendatione sua, ut Auctor adhuc de Nomine tan-

tantum mihi cognitus pervolūtaretur à me diligenter, mihiq̃ue fieret perfamiliaris, & summa esset illius apud me commendatio.



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A N
HISTORICAL ELOGY
O F
Mr. *H U E T.*

PETER DANIEL HUET,
ancient Bishop of AVRAN-
CHE, who died at PARIS
the 26th of *January* 1721,
was born at CAEN the 8th of *Fe-*
bruary 1630. The Love of Study
anticipated in him, we must not
say altogether the Use of Reason,
because we are ignorant when that
begins, but at least the Use of
Words. *I had (a) scarcely,* says he,

(a) Huetiana, p. 3. Commentar. p. 16.

left the Breast, but I envied those I saw read. He lost his Father in eighteen Months; his Mother four Years after. He was put into the Hands of negligent Guardians, who boarded him in a mean School, where with little Assistance, and worse Examples, he notwithstanding finished the Course of his Humanities, before he was thirteen compleat.

For his Philosophy, he fell into the Care of an excellent (b) Professor, who after the Manner of *Plato*, would have him begin by learning somewhat of Geometry. But the Scholar went farther than desired. He took such a Taste for Geometry, that he made it his principal Study, and almost despised the Writings which his Master dictated to him, who was hap-

(b) Father *Mambrun*, known by his Latin Verses, and a Treatise of Epick Poetry.

pily so wise and discreet, as not to be uneasie with him for it. He successively run over all the other Parts of the Mathematicks; and altho' this Science was not then in Vogue in *Colleges*, nor even any where else, to that Degree it has been since, he was brought to maintain publick Theses in the same, the first that ever were known at *Caen*.

He was now to go out of his Classes, to study CIVIL LAW, and take his Degrees therein. Two Works which appeared then (c) interrupted that useful Study, and threw him into another more amusing. These two Works were the Principles of DES-CARTES, and the GEOGRAPHY of the Holy LAND by BOCHART. A Proof that we should not harbour Preju-

(c) The Principles of *Des-Cartes*, printed in 1643. and the *Phaleg.* of *Bochart* in 1646.

dices, or at least be too obstinate in Opinion, is, that the same Man, and a most judicious Man too, may sometimes in his different Ages think very differently: Mr. HUE T, who censured *Des-Cartes* a great while after so severely, relished him very well at first, admired, and adhered to him many Years. As for BOCHART'S GEOGRAPHY, it made a double Impression on him, both by the immense Learning of the Work, and by the Presence of the Author, MINISTER of the PROTESTANTS at CAEN. All that Book beng full of HEBREW and GREEK, he was for knowing those Languages forthwith, went to pay his Respects to him, desired his Advice, Friendship, and became his Disciple; but the Pupil began to be touched with Emulation. It often happens that a young Man with Wit and Courage, needs no more than

than a living Example to determine his Studies. He, who did no more all his Life long than make Madrigals, might have been a Scholar of the first Rank, if he had had in good Time a B O C H A R T before his Eyes.

Mean while we must not think that Mr. H U E T was an Enemy to those Amusements and Exercises which belong to Youth. He saw the World, (*d*) was for being well received, and endeavoured to please. 'Tis true he did not dance very gracefully, but was the first at racing, the best Horseman: he exercised Arms, vaulted, and swam better, he says, than any of his Companions.

Being twenty Years of Age and one Day, by the Custom of N O R M A N D Y he was at length delivered from his Guardians, who sordidly withheld as much from him as they could. His greatest Desire, and

(*d*) Huetiana, p. 4. Comment. p. 58.

the first he gratified, as soon as Master of himself, was to see *Paris*; not so much by Curiosity, as to furnish himself with Books, and to know the PRINCES OF LEARNING. It is one of his own Expressions. He paid his first Respects to P. SIRMOND, who was then above ninety Years of Age. This amiable and venerable Father to his great Learning joined as great Candour, which was natural to him, and as great Civility, he had acquired in the Court of ROME, and that of FRANCE. Father PETAU, not near so aged, naturally more rigid than the other, smoothed his Brow in Favour of a young Provincial, who was not only ready to hear him, but even durst sometimes (e) recede from his Opinion, and contend, though very young, against so great a Man.

(e) See his DISSERTATIONS on divers Subjects, &c. Tom. ii. p. 432, 433.

I must name all the learned Men of that Time and Place, if I should mention those Mr. H U E T was acquainted with, and whose Esteem he gained, at his first Journey to P A R I S. Two Years after he had Occasion to know those of *Holland*. For the Q U E E N of S W E D E N having invited B O C H A R T to make her a Visit, he went with him, and set out in the Month of *April* 1652. B O C H A R T arrived when Things were in such a State, that he was not so graciously received, as he had Reason to expect. The Health of that Princess was impaired. Too much Application to Study, for she spent whole Nights in it, had disordered her Blood.

B O U R D E L O T her Physician, a cunning Courtier, and who had studied her Humour as well as her Constitution, obliged her to break off all Conversation with Men of Learning,

Learning, in Hopes to have the whole Government of her to himself. BOCHART acquiesced. As to Mr. HUET, he was too young to be formidable to that Physician. He saw the Queen often, she was for retaining him: but the inconstant Humour of CHRISTINA made him timorous, and he thought it better to return into FRANCE, at three Months End. The principal Advantage he reaped by his Voyage, was a Manuscript of ORIGEN, which he had copied at STOCKHOLM.

Among the learned Men he knew in HOLLAND, SALMASIUS was of the first Rank. Would any one, who sees the Warmth which is predominant in the Writings of SALMASIUS, say he was in the Bottom easy, communicative, and Good-nature it self? To that Degree that he bore to be domineer'd over by a haughty,

haughty, ill-humoured Woman, who boasted she had for a Husband, but not for a Master, *the most learned of all the Nobles, and the most noble of all the Learned.* When Mr. H U E T was returned into his own Country, he took to his Studies with more Vigour than ever, to qualify himself to give us his Manuscript of O R I G E N. Two Sorts of Academies, one formed in his Absence for polite Learning, another which he founded himself for *Physicks*, served to divert him from Time to Time: or rather to change his Studies. In translating O R I G E N, he weighed the Rules of Translation, and the divers Manners of the most celebrated Translators. This made Way for the first Book he published, whereby, if I may say so, he made his Entry into the Land of Letters, in which his Readers admired, what they afterwards admired in all his

other Works, indefatigable Reading, judicious Criticism, and above all LATINITY, which would have done Honour to the Age of AUGUSTUS. In short, sixteen Years after his Return from SWEDEN, his ORIGEN saw the Light. Those sixteen Years he spent in his own Country, where without other Employment, he was taken up wholly with himself and his Books, not interrupting his Way of Life, unless to go every Year, and shew himself for a Month or two at PARIS.

In the mean Time he had some shining Offers of Fortune, with which he was not dazled. The QUEEN of SWEDEN, after she had abdicated the Crown, and betook her herself to ROME for the remaining Part of her Life, would have drawn him to her in 1659. But that which besel BOCHART, who was so ardently desired, and afterwards so soon

soon forgot, deterred him from yielding to the Temptation of seeing ITALY. He was desired in SWEDEN to be intrusted with the Education of the young KING; the SWEDES had in 1660 made CHARLES GUSTAVUS Successor to CHRISTINA; but he had the Resolution to thank them for their Offer, and those who judge of Actions by Events, will find he did very well to remain in *France*. For about ten Years after he was nominated Sub-preceptor to the DAUPHIN, without having any other Patrons but his own Merit, and the Discretion of MR. *de* MONTAUSIER.

He arrived at Court in 1670, and continued there 'till 1680, the Year in which the DAUPHIN was married. The more he found this new Station exposed him to frequent Avocations, the greater Husband he was
of

of his Time. He would scarce allow himself a few Hours for Sleep. All the Rest of his Leisure was spent, in the necessary Duties of his Employment, or in his DEMONSTRATIO EVANGELICA, begun, and finished in the Hurry of the Court.

I must not here forget the Service he did to Learning, by procuring for us that Set of COMMENTARIES which are commonly call'd IN USUM DELPHINI. Altho' the first Thought of them came from Mr. *de* MONTAUSIER, we are indebted to Mr. HUET for drawing the Plan, and directing the Execution of it, as far as the Docility, or the Capacity of the Workmen would permit.

Being wholly taken up so long in Compositions, and Lectures, that had Religion for their direct Object, at length arrived to the Age of Forty Six, he entered into Holy Orders.

After

After which he had the Abbey of AUNAY, whereto he retired every Summer, when he left the Court. One of the Works which he composed there under the Title of *Quæstiones Alnetanæ*, will æternize the Name of that Solitude, agreeably situated in the Groves, which is the most pleasant Canton of the lower NORMANDY.

In 1685 he was nominated to the Bishoprick of SOISSONS. Before his Bulls were expedited, Mr. the Abbot *de SILLERY* being promoted to the Bishoprick of AVRANCHES, they made an Exchange with the King's Consent. But by Reason of some Disturbances betwixt the Court of *France*, and that of *Rome*, they could not be consecrated 'till the Year 1692. I believe so long a Delay was not very uneasy to Mr. HUET, for the Life he had led, and liked above all other, did not at all agree with

with the Episcopal Care and Duties. Accordingly it was not long before he grew weary of them. He resigned his Bishoprick of *Avranche* in 1699.

To make him Amends, the King gave him the *Abbey* of *Fontenay*, which is at the Gates of *Caen*. The Love Mr. HUE T had for his Country induced him to fix there, and in that View he appropriated the Gardens and the House of the Abbey. His Country seem'd very amiable to him, as long as he knew none but Friends there. But as soon as ever he had taken Possession of the Lands, Law-suits attacked him from every Quarter, although at the same Time, Thanks to his native Air, he had some Disposition for the *Chicanarie* of the Bar.

He then went again to *Paris*, and lodged in a professed House of the *Jesuits*; where he lived his last twenty Years, during which he applied himself

himself principally to write Annotations on the vulgar Translation of the Bible. He did not only look upon that holy Book as the Fountain of Religion; but took it (f) of all Books to be the most proper to form, and exercise a Scholar. He had read over the *Hebrew* twenty four Times, in conferring it with other Oriental Texts. Every Day, as he says, not one excepted, he spent two or three Hours therein, from 1681, to 1712.

A cruel Disease which seized him that same Year, and confined him to his Bed near six Months, considerably weakned not only his Mind but his Body, and Memory. In the mean while, when he had a little recovered his Strength, he undertook to write his own Life; and did it with all the Elegancy, though

(f) Commentar. p. 354. Huetiana, p. 182.

not with all the Order, nor Accuracy of his other Works: his Memory, not so good as it had been, diminished daily; so that not being in a State to form a regular Work of it, he did no more than commit to Paper some loose and separate Thoughts, which was as much as he could then do.

Although he was pleased to intrust me with the only Copy, to publish it under the Title of *Huetiana*; I cannot flatter myself that for this Reason, I am allowed to relate here, with what Condescension he treated me, since I had the Honour to be known to him in 1708. 'Tis questioned when we mention great Men, whether it be Pride or Gratitude, which moves us to speak of their Amity; and frequently through Fear of being suspected of a Weakness, we omit a Duty.

Never-

Nevertheless I cannot but own I procured the fifth Edition of his *Poems* in 1709. I am the more willing to remember it, because without this Edition, which *awaked his sleeping Muse*, 'tis very likely he would never have thought of the five (g) new *Metamorphoses*, which he composed in 1710 and 1711. All his Wit appears there. How exquisitely fine both for a Scholar of his Rank, and an Age so far advanced! how florid, and if we may say so, what juvenile Imagination!

As to what remains, if it be well considered that he lived fourscore and eleven Years, wanting a few Days, addicted himself to Study from his tender Infancy, reserved most of his Time to himself, almost all the while enjoy'd unalterable Health; that at his *Levee*, his lying down, and his

(g) Lampyris, Galerita, Mimus, &c.

Meals, he made his Servants read to him; that in a Word, to use his own Terms, *neither the Fire (h) of Youth, the Incumbrances of Business, the Diversity of Employments, the Society of his Equals, nor the Avocations of the World, could lessen the invincible Love of Learning, which he always retain'd:* we may infer from hence that *M. d'Avanches* was of all Men the most studious.

Besides his being naturally robust, he lived by Rule. From the Age of forty he eat no Supper, although he dined very sparingly. He was content with common Fare, no Ragoos, and hardly put an eighth Part of Wine into his Water. Towards the Evening he took a (i) medicinal Sort of Soop. Indeed, when he was

(h) *Huetiana*, p. 4. See likewise his *Commentar.* lib. 1. p. 15. & lib. v. p. 278. (i) Known by the Name of *Dr. Delorme's red Broth.*

best in Health, he had a pale Look, enough to make it be feared he was indisposed.

One Singularity very remarkable is, that for two or three Days before his Decease, all his Wit revived, all his Memory returned. He employed those precious Moments in Acts of Piety, and died in Peace, full of Trust in God.

I know no more of his Manuscripts than these: A Latin Translation of the *Amours of Daphnis and Chloé*, composed at the Age of eighteen; a Romance intituled *The false Incas*, writ at the Age of twenty five; a Philosophical Treatise of *the Weakness of Human Understanding*, made at the same Time with his *Quæstiones Alnetanæ*; an Answer to Mr. REGIS, touching the Metaphysicks of DES-CARTES; his Annotations on that Translation of the Bible called the Vulgar; and a Collection of between

five and six hundred Letters, as well *Latin* as *French*, to Men of Learning. As to his printed Books they follow according to the Order in which they appeared.

De Interpretatione Libri duo. Paris, 1661. in 4to. *Stade*, 1680. in 12mo. *Hague*, 1683. in 8vo.

Origenis Commentaria in sacram Scripturam. Rhoan, 1668. in fol. 2 Vol. *Cologne*, 1685. in fol.

De l'Origine des Romans. Paris, 1670. 1678. 1685. 1693. 1711. in 12mo. *London* 1672. in 16to, *English*. *Amst.* 1679. 1716. in 12mo, *Dutch*.

Discours prononcè a l'Academie Françoise. Paris 1674. in 4to. *Amst.* 1709. in 12mo.

Animadversiones in Manilium, & Scaligeri Notas: à la fin du Manile Dauphin. Paris, 1679. in 4to.

Demonstratio Evangelica. Paris, 1679.

1679. 1694. in fol. *Amst.* 1680.
in 8vo. 2 Vol. *Leipsick*, 1694.
in 4to.

Censura Philosophiæ Cartesianæ. *Pa-*
ris, 1689. 1694. in 12mo. *Helm-*
stad. 1690. in 4to. *Franecker*, 1690.
in 12mo. *Hanover*, 1690, in 12mo.

Quest. Alnetanæ. *Caen*, 1690. in
4to.

De la Situation du Paradis terrestre.
Paris, 1691. in 12mo. *Leipsick*,
1694. in 12mo. and in 4to. *Amst.*
1701. in 12mo. *Ibid. lat.* 1698. in
12mo.

Nouveaux Memoires pour servir a
l'Histoire du Cartesianisme. *Paris*,
1692. 1711. in 12mo. *Utrecht*,
1698. in 16to. *Amst.* 1698. in
12mo.

Statuts Synodaux pour le Diocese
d'Avranches. *Caen*, 1693. 1695.
1696. 1698. in 8vo.

Carmina. *Utrecht*, 1664. 1700.
in 8vo. *Deventer*, 1668. in 8vo.
b 2 *Amst.*

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Amst. 1672. in 16to. *Paris*, 1709.
in 12mo.

De Navigationibus Salomonis. Am-
sterdam, 1698. in 8vo and in fol.

Notæ in Anthologiam Epigrammatum
Græcorum: à la fin de ses Poesies, Edi-
tion de Grævius. Utrecht, 1700. in
12mo.

Origenes de Caen. Rouen, 1702.
1706. in 8vo.

Dissertations sur diverses Matieres
de Religion, & de Philologie. Paris,
1712. in 12mo.

Histoire du Commerce & de la Navi-
gation des Anciens. Paris, 1716. in
12mo. *Brussels*, 1717. in 12mo.

Commentarius de Rebus ad eum perti-
nentibus. Amsterdam, 1718. in 12mo.

Huetiana. Paris & Amst. 1722.
in 12mo.





THE
Author's P R E F A C E.

To Philosophers his Friends.

- I. The Introduction and Argument of the Work.
- II. Its Division.

I.



EAR, my dear Friends, The Introduction, and Argument of the Work.
not my Opinion, touching the Nature of human Understanding, and Reason, but that of an excellent Person, very well versed in all the ancient and modern

b 3

Sects

Señs of Philosophy. He was a Provincial, a Man of Quality. Had travelled very much in his Youth in Favour of his Studies, and contracted strict Friendships with those who had some Reputation in speculative Sciences. Being afterwards preferred to an important Post in his Country, he met with potent Enemies, who did him ill Offices, and obliged him to leave his native Air, and retire to Padua, a Place very agreeable and proper to the Studies he had always cultivated, and which I had a good while since chosen for the Retreat of mine. He came to see me, according to his wonted Custom, not as believing me a Philosopher, but a Lover of Philosophy; such as he knew me to be by some Writings that had escaped me. I was presently struck with the Beauty of his Wit, the Extent of his Knowledge, and principally with his Candour and Civility. Pleased with the Esteem and Acknowledgment, in which I received

ceived his *Visits*; and in the Conformity of our Inclinations, it was not long before he open'd to me the Bottom of his Heart. For after I had observed that he warmly attacked all Sects of Philosophers, in the Manner of the Academicks, without adhering to any; and not being able by all the Application, and Questions which I wearied him with, to make him take a Side, I had Recourse to Sollicitations, and pray'd him very seriously to be open. Overcome at length by Importunity, he complied; and in this Conference, with many other which followed, he communicated his Thoughts to me touching Philosophy without Reserve. His Discourses seem'd to be subtil, and very far from common Opinions, and I was not willing to lose them. I took Care therefore to write them down, as soon as we parted, lest I should forget them; and for my own Use only, without think-

*ing they should ever go out of my Hands.
And thus he explained himself.*

When I made my first Application to the Study of Philosophy in my Youth, I was very much disturbed at those perpetual Disputes of Philosophers, upon all Subjects; and in Expectation of the great Advantages of Philosophy, which were so much boasted of, Knowledge of Truth, and Tranquility of Mind: I was much surprized to find my self plunged in the thick Darkness of invincible Ignorance, and Debates of which I could see no End. And being educated in the Philosophy of Aristotle, according to the Custom of that Age, I was still more astonished that the Sect of that Philosopher only, should be able to produce so great a Diversity of Opinions, of Greeks, Arabians, and Latins, of Ancients and Moderns. Wonder'd at the Blindness of human Understanding, seeing Aristotle had the Boldness to say that Philosophers who preceded

preceded him, were either ignorant, or vain-glorious in presuming they had carried Philosophy to its utmost Perfection, and thought he might safely assure the World, the great Work would soon be accomplished. Though in the mean while it was so far from it, that new Contests were seen to arise daily, and Time which moderates all Things, did on the contrary exasperate the Spirits of Philosophers; so that their Science seem'd not to be so much the boasted Search of Truth, as a Method of prevaricating with Art, and disputing with Subtilty. I wish some Person of Authority and Learning would undertake what is reported of the Proconsul Gellius; being at Athens he assembled all the Philosophers, who were there very numerous, and by a premeditated Discourse exhorted them, to put an End to their long Debates, offering his Mediation and good Offices. A Thing which has appeared ridiculous to

a

a great many, but not so to me: for the Accommodation might have been effected; if each of them laying aside his Prejudices, would have entred into a new and serious Examination of the Opinions he appeared to be so zealous for; if he would have proposed no otherwise than as uncertain, what he was accusom'd to maintain as unquestionable, and learn once for all, to withhold his Belief, and suspend his Judgment. Neither can I disapprove the Study Nero made of Philosophy, to discover the Cause of so great a Diversity of Opinions; provided he had had a sincere Desire to terminate those Controversies, and not to foment them for his Diversion, according to the Levity and Malignity of his Temper.

The Doctrine of Des-Cartes in these later Times obtained much Reputation; and because it drew a great Multitude after it by its Novelty, as is usual, many conjectured that Aristotle would
soon

soon be forsaken, and Des-Cartes get the Ascendant. Tired with the Divisions of the Peripateticks, I was willing to know what might be expected from that new Philosophy. I was very much pleased with it, for it appeared to me to be made up of a small Number of Principles, and those very simple; it found its Way to first Causes by a clear and easy Method. Nevertheless it was not long ere I perceived, that the Peripateticks still stood their Ground. That dangerous Factions were formed against Des-Cartes; that Gassendi made himself Chief of a Party, and renewed the Sect of Epicurus with Success, all decried, and suspected of Impiety as it was, and although he had more Adversaries than Friends. I was then willing to confine my self wholly within the Bounds of Platonism, not thinking I could find a better Master, than that great Man, to whom Antiquity gave the Sirname
of

of Divine, whom so many of the most learned have admired, and the most ancient Fathers of the Church followed, making Use of his Method and Opinions, to explain and defend the Christian Doctrine. But when I came to dive into the Bottom of that Philosophy, seeking the solid Foundations of Truth I found Nothing in it which could fix my Mind; no certain and determined Principles; no System nor Connexion of Doctrine; no Coherence; Nothing consequential. Every Thing there is handled with Delicacy and Elegance, but pro and con maintained: and the Affirmative and Negative defended by Reasons of equal Validity, without determining the Mind to either. Besides, that wavering and fluctuating Sect has produced others, of which each pretends to be the genuine and real Doctrine of Plato, and that all the rest are sophisticate. Insomuch that having read the Works of Plato, and the greater
Part

Part of the Platonicks, I found my self at a greater Distance from Truth than ever. That did not discourage me in the least. I was for running through all the ancient Philosophy. I collected the various Opinions from every Quarter; read exactly what Diogenes Laertius, and others besides had writ of the Lives, and the Tenets of Philosophers their Predecessors, hoping that in this great Number of Sects, as contemptible as they seem'd, some one or other might be met with less subject to Contradictions, and more proper to fix the Uncertainty and Anxiety of the Mind.

My Hope was not vain. The Doctrine of Arcesilas, Carneades, and Pyrrho, pleased me much; and I conceived that they were better acquainted with the Nature of human Understanding, than all other Philosophers: altho' I did not approve of their Opinions in every Thing, and having relinquished

quished them in many Points, I became the proper Author of my own System. A long Use of Study, Reflections, and Meditations, having afterwards made me know better, I remained convinced, that neither I nor any other Man else, ever had any natural Faculty to discover Truth with full and absolute Assurance, and that the Cause of all Error, is the Precipitation of our Spirits, giving Credit too rashly to Opinions which are proposed.

Thus this learned Man spoke; and perceiving the Surprize I was in to see a Doctrine renewed, which I thought was entirely extinct and abolished: You admire my Freedom, said he, in presuming to offer a Discourse which seems to be repugnant to common Sense: or rather my Timidity and Diffidence, in not venturing to give Credit to the Testimony of my own Sense and Reason. But if you'll be pleased to hear me, I
pro-

promise myself so much from the Goodness of your Temper, and great Candour, that you will on the contrary wonder at the Temerity and Blindness of human Understanding, in believing we see, what we do not see, and inconsiderately flinging ourselves into Error. I will hear you, said I to him, with all the Attention you can desire; and I heartily wish you may perform what you promise. Then he began to speak as follows.

II.

To give certain Limits to this Dispute, it seems to be necessary to divide it into three Parts. First and above all we are to prove, that human Understanding cannot know Truth with perfect and absolute Certainty, by the Aid of Reason. In the next Place we must enquire with Accuracy, what is the most sure Way, and legitimate Method

Its Division

*thod of Philosophizing. Lastly we
will answer the Objections of those whose
Sentiments are contrary to ours.*





OF THE
WEAKNESS
OF
Human Understanding.

BOOK I.

Truth cannot be known to human Understanding, with entire and perfect Certainty, by the Help of Reason.

CHAP. I.

We must first shew: 1. What Philosophy is. 2. What human Understanding is. 3. What Idea is. 4. What Thought is. 5. What Reason is. 6.

B What

Of the W E A K N E S S of

What Truth is. 7. There are many Kinds and Degrees of Certainty. The Certainty of Faith perfects the Certainty of human Nature.



HE who undertakes to prove the Weakness of human Understanding, finds at the first Entrance of the Subject, a large, open Field, and beaten long since by the greatest Part of the ancient *Philosophers*; in which he must reason upon *Nature*, as well as the Search of *Truth*. For he does not observe the Order that is requisite, who endeavours to know *Truth*, without understanding what *Truth* is, and whether it may be known.

What Philosophy is.

I. For *Philosophy* being Nothing else but the Study of *Wisdom*, the Search of *Truth*, and an Effort of human Understanding to know *it* by the Assistance of Reason; it is necessary for the *Philosopher*, to know what *Truth*, what human Understanding, and Reason is, and be assured that human Understanding may know *Truth* by the Help of Reason, before he engages in a Search which may give him a great deal of Trouble without any Success. As a *Huntsman* who prepares to follow his

Human Understanding.

3.

his *Game*, if he perceives that inaccessible Rocks, and impenetrable Caverns hinder his taking it, will desist; and not begin a laborious Pursuit to no Purpose. Let us endeavour then to discover the Nature of *Truth*, of Reason, and Man's Understanding, as far as we are allowed to discover it. For being convinced that we can know Nothing by Reason with perfect Certainty, I should be a Fool, to pretend to know clearly what *Truth* and Reason are.

2. Thus then I define the human *Mind* or *Spirit*: A Principle, or Power born in Man, moved or excited to form *Ideas*, and Thoughts, by the Reception and Impression of *Species* in the Brain. By these *Species*, I understand not *Images*, or *Shadows* that proceed from Bodies, which are likewise so called; but the *Traces* imprinted in the Brain by the Motion of the *Spirits* and the Nerves, when they are agitated by the Organs of Sensation, and influenced by external Causes: Which Impression of these *Traces* makes the Soul, intimately joined to the Brain, find it self disposed in a certain Manner.

What human Understanding is.

2^d. *Feelings*

3. I call an *Idea*, an *Image* which the Soul forms to it self, when disposed in

What an Idea is.

B 2

a cer-

Of the WEAKNESS of

a certain Manner by the Impression of Species in the Brain.

What
Thought is.

4. I call *Thought*, the Action of the Understanding, moved and determined by *Species* in the Brain, to form to it self *Ideas*, to compare, and judge of them together.

What Reason
is.

5. I call *Reason*, that *Faculty* human Understanding has to search after Truth by its natural Operations.

What Truth
is.

6. As to *Truth* (not that which the *Philosophers* call *Truth of Existence*, but that which they call *Truth of Judgment*) I define it thus: The Agreement and Correspondence of the Judgment, which our Understanding makes in View of the *Idea* that is in us, with the external Object which is the Origin of that *Idea*. To explain this Definition; suppose the *Object* which presents its self without is a *Wolf*, from whence the *Idea* which is in me is formed; my Understanding in View of this *Idea*, conceives and judges it to be a *Wolf*. This Judgment which my Understanding forms, corresponds and agrees with the external *Object*; and therefore is said to be true: and this Correspondence, and Agreement of Judgment, which my Understanding has formed with the external

Human Understanding.

ternal *Object*, is called *Truth*. Whereas on the contrary if my Understanding in View of this *Idea* conceives and judges it to be a Dog, this Judgment formed by my Understanding, is different from, and unlike the external *Object*; and for this Reason is said to be False; and this Difference or Disagreement with the external *Object*, is called Falsity or Error. I call an external *Object*, either that which is present, when the Understanding is moved or determined to think of it; or that which has been present to our Minds before, and formed its *Idea* or *Image* in us; whether it be the Representation of the *Object* we have seen before; or the Description of it which has been made to us. From whence it comes that in Sleep, the Deliriums of a Fever, or in Madness, so many *Images* represent themselves to the Mind, whose external *Objects* are not present, but whose *Ideas* remain in us. Some give a Definition of these Things different from ours, and affix other Notions to these Terms. I shall make Use of those I have now proposed. If it appears then that the Nature of Man be such, that he cannot know with absolute Certainty, and entire Evidence, by the Help of Reason,

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that an external *Object* agrees with, and answers to the Judgment which his Understanding has formed thereof, in View of the *Idea* he has of it; it must necessarily follow that Man cannot know Truth with perfect Certainty by the Aid of Reason.

There are
many Kinds
and Degrees
of Certainty.
The
Certainty of
Revelation
perfects the
Certainty of
human Nature.

7. As to the Rest, there are two Ways of knowing *Truth*. Either we know it with Doubt and Uncertainty; as when we see, or think we see, in the Language of the *Poet*, the *Moon* behind the Clouds. Or we know it with Certainty; and that Certainty has likewise two Degrees. For the Certainty wherein the *Blessed* know the Things of *Heaven*, which we may call the supreme Degree of Certainty, is different from the Certainty with which Men know Things on Earth during their Life. Moreover, this last kind of Certainty has also two Degrees. For by *Faith* we know most certainly the Things which God has revealed, with a Certainty which may be called *divine*, because *God* is its Author; and we know other Things with human Certainty. This human Certainty has likewise divers Degrees; for there are some Things we know with more Certainty than other. We know more certainly,

and

Human Understanding.

7

and more evidently, that the Whole is greater than its Part, than we know that the *Planet* of *Saturn* is above that of *Jupiter*, or the Truth of what is attested by two Witnesses. This last Knowledge is not certain but by a Certainty of Probability; the second is certain with a true Certainty; and the first is most certain. There are then three Degrees of human Certainty; the highest, the mean, and the lowest: each of which likewise is capable of being augmented or diminished.

There are still two other Kinds of human Certainty; the one we call *Physical* or Natural, the other *Moral*. I know certainly that twice two make four, and that two Bodies equal to a third, are equal between themselves. I know also that near to the *Bosphorus* of *Thrace* there is a City named *Constantinople*; and that there was formerly an Emperor of *Rome*, named *Augustus*: That Fire heats, and Ice cools. I have these first *Notices* with a Certainty I call *Physical*; by the Light of Reason, a Faculty which Nature has given to my Understanding: and I have these last *Notices* by sufficient Evidences, by the Authority of Usage, and the Information of Experience, to which Things,

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Men after their Way and ordinary Practice, are accustomed to give Credit with Assurance. We may see from hence, how many Kinds of Certainty *God* has imparted to human Understanding during this Life. That *divine* Certainty with which we know Things by *Faith*, is not however equal to the heavenly Certainty of the *Blessed*, neither in Respect of Firmness, nor Evidence, according to the Testimony of *St. Paul*, (a) when he says, *We now see through a Glass, darkly*; and that the *Blessed* in Heaven see *Face to Face*; that *now he knows in Part, and that then he shall know as also he is known*. Moreover this Certainty of *Faith*, which comes from *God*, and we at present enjoy, is far above human Certainty, even the first Degree; whether we acquire it by the Assistance of Reason, or the Help of the Senses. *St. Chrysostome* (b) says therefore with much Truth, that if we do not hold those Things we know by *Revelation* and *Faith*, to be more certain than those we know by Sense, we want *Faith*. Seeing then we must allow the highest

(a) 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12.
upon the Epist. to the *Hebr.*

(b) *St. Chrysost. Hom. 22.*

Human Understanding.

2

Degree of human Certainty, as for Example, that whereby I hold some first *Principles*, and *Geometrical Axioms* for certain, to be very inferior to the Certainty of *Revelation* or *Faith*, and the Certainty of *Faith* to be very inferior to that of the Blessed, it is evident the highest Degree of human Certainty is not perfect: for that which is perfect, is compleat in all Points, and wants Nothing necessary to entire Perfection; but to human Certainty, there wants that of *Revelation*, or *Faith*; and moreover the Certainty of the *Blessed*.

When I say then Man cannot know *Truth*, it must be understood, that in this Life he cannot know it with that supreme Certainty, as to want Nothing of intire Perfection; but may know it with human Certainty, to which *God* is pleased the Understanding of Man may arrive, whilst he is join'd to this mortal Body. Human Understanding having Nothing more sure or solid whereon it may rely, we may call it the highest human Certainty, although not absolutely perfect, and though Man assisted by the Power of Nature only, cannot know *Truth* with entire Evidence, and may know it much more certainly by the Help of Faith, but still according to the
Terms

Of the WEAKNES of

Terms of the Apostle *through a Glass darkly*. For what is wanting to human Nature, to obtain a perfect Knowledge of things, the *Grace of God* supplies by *Faith*, fortifying the Imbecility of Reason and the Senses, dissipating the Obscurity of Doubts, and sustaining the anxious Mind. But I shall soon explain these things more at large.



C H A P. II.

Man cannot know Truth with perfect and intire Certainty, by the Assistance of Reason. The first Proof drawn from sacred Authors.

BUT before we prove it by the Things themselves, we will demonstrate it by the Authority of *God*, who frequently warns us of our Ignorance, and giving ourselves useless Pains, when we attempt to acquire the Knowledge of Things, and their Causes; and that Man is so made by Nature, as not to be able to obtain the Fruit of true Knowledge by his Studies. As it is explained by
So-

Human Understandng.

11

Solomon, the wisest of Men. (a) *I applied mine Heart to know Wisdom, and to see the Business that is done upon the Earth: (There is that neither Day nor Night seeth Sleep with his Eyes) then I beheld all the Work of God, that a Man cannot find out the Work that is done under the Sun: because though a Man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, further, though a wise Man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it. He imputes the Cause of this Weakness to the Body, in the Mass of which, while the Spirit remains involved, it cannot raise itself to the Knowledge of Things. For he says: (b) *The corruptible Body presseth down the Soul; and the earthly Tabernacle weigheth down the Mind that museth upon many Things. And hardly do we guess aright at Things that are upon Earth, and with Labour do we find the things that are before us: but the Things that are in Heaven, who hath searched out? and thy Counsel who hath known, except thou give Wisdom, and send thy holy Spirit from above?**

He declares in another Place, that this infinite Desire of Knowledge, which

(a) Eccl. viii. 16, 17.

(b) Wis. ix. 15, & seq.

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is born with us, was given of God to Man, as an Itch, and a Leprosy to torment him to no purpose. (c) *I have seen*, says he, *the Travel which God hath given to the Sons of Men, to be exercised in it. He hath made every thing beautiful in his Time, also he hath set the World in their Heart, so that no Man can find out the Work that God maketh from the Beginning to the End.* From hence come those Sayings of Ecclesiasticus, which seem to have been taken out of the Writings of Solomon; (d) *Seek not out the Things that are too hard for thee, neither search the Things that are above thy Strength. But what is commanded thee, think thereupon with Reverence; for it is not needful for thee, to see with thine Eyes, the Things that are in secret. Be not curious in unnecessary Matters: for more Things are shewed unto thee, than Men understand.* St. Paul, who was sent by God, to teach the Gentiles the true Philosophy, shews plainly to the Greeks, who sought the Knowledge of Truth with so much Application, how much the Works of God are above the Capacity of human Understanding. (e) *It is written*, says he, *I*

(c) Eccl. iii. 10, 11. (d) Eccles. iii. 22, & seq. (e) 1 Cor. i. 19, & seq.

will destroy the *Wisdom* of the *Wise*, and will bring to nothing the *Understanding* of the *Prudent*; Where is the *Wise*? Where is the *Scribe*? Where is the *Disputer* of this *World*? For after that in the *Wisdom* of *God*; the *World* by *Wisdom* knew not *God*; that is to say, by human *Wisdom*, which is *Reason*; It pleased *God* by the *Foolishness* of *preaching*, to save them that believe; that is to say, to provide for the *Salvation* of those who make *Use* of *Faith*, and not of *Reason*. And afterwards: *The Gentiles seek after Wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified*. Then he adds: *The Foolishness with God, is wiser than Men*. And a little lower: *God hath chosen the weak Things of the World to confound the Things which are mighty*. And afterwards he says, (f) *The Wisdom of this World is Foolishness with God*. And at last he confirms this *Doctrine* taken from *Isaiah*, by this *Oracle* of *David*: *God knows the Thoughts of Men that they are but vain*. He de-
 horts the *Colossians* from the *Study* of that proud and deceitful *Philosophy*, which relies on human *Reason*, and not on the *Faith* of *Jesus Christ*. (g) *Be-*

(f) 1 Cor. iii. 19.

(g) Col. ii. 8.

ware, says he, lest any Man spoil you through Philosophy and vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Ruminations of the World, and not after Christ. It was then by these Considerations that the Emperor Constantine (h) in his Harangue to the Assembly of Saints, ventured to say openly, that Man cannot discover Truth. And Arnobius more ancient than Constantine, in his Writings says, that (i) Man is a blind Animal, who does not know himself; and cannot know by any Reasoning, what he ought to do, in what Time, and in what Manner. He places this likewise in the Number of the Benefits, conferred on human Nature by Jesus Christ, and for which, he says, he would have merited the Esteem of God, had he been but meer Man, namely, because he has shewed that Men are imperfect Creatures, who give Credit to vain Opinions, cannot comprehend any Thing aright, know Nothing, nor see what is before their Eyes. The same Arnobius says in another Place, that when human Understanding would discern Truth, the Obscurity of Things obstructs it, and as if it was blind, sees nothing of Certainty,

(h) Constant. Orat. ad cat. Sanct. Cap. 8. (i) Arnob. lib. 1 & 2. p. 46, 47.

and by the Obliquity of Surmises and Conjectures, falls into Error; that we dispute every Thing, but know Nothing. And though we do know Nothing, impose upon our selves nevertheless by hearkning wholly to our Pride, which persuades us we have attained to Science; and that our Weakness and Ignorance is the more pitiable, because when (as it sometimes happens) we do speak Truth, we don't certainly know we have spoken Truth; and says it was in this View, that *Jesus Christ* called the Mind of Man from the Search of those Things, which are above his Capacity, and excited him to the Contemplation and the Service of God.

Lactantius, a Disciple of *Arnobius*, trod in the Steps of his Master, and taught that Man is ignorant of Truth, that he knows Nothing by *Philosophy*, and ought to regulate his Life according to received Customs. All his Book of *Institutions* is full of this Doctrine, but particularly, when, as if he would encourage us to do what we now plead for, he speaks thus: (k) *Holy Writ teaches us that the Thoughts of Philosophers are Folly, that this Doctrine*

(k) *Lactant. Instit. Lib. 3. Cap. 1.*

Of the WEAKNESS of

ought to be established by Acts, as well as Proofs; lest any one deceived by the specious Name of Wisdom, or led aside by the Splendor of vain Eloquence, should delight to place Faith in human Things, more than divine: that is to say, to obey Reason rather than Revelation.

Saint Gregory Nazianzen (l) puts us in Mind of our Ignorance; when he says that we see not the State nor the Reasons of Things created, nor of the Creation, but through a Cloud while we are in this Life; so thick is the Obscurity which covers our Understanding, so clog'd are we by the Weight of our Bodies; but shall see those Things clearly, when separate from them. St. Augustin is of the same Opinion. (m) Not that Philosophy of this World, says he, which our Religion does justly detest; but the Philosophy of another intellectual World: to which, this Reason as subtil as it is, would never have invited our Souls, blinded as they are by divers Darkneses of Error, and polluted by the Defilements of the Body, if God in his Mercy towards Men, had not vouchsafed unto us the Light and

(l) Greg. Naz. Orat. 34. qua est 2. de Theol.
 Augustin. contr. Academic. lib. 3. Cap. 19.

(m) Au-

the Authority of the divine Understanding; of which not only the Precepts, but the Acts also have a Power to excite Souls to consider with themselves, and to turn their Eyes towards their true Country, without the Contention of Disputes.

In another Place he expresses himself in this manner: (n) Because human Understanding obscured by the habitual Darknefs, with which it is covered in the Night of Sin, cannot steadily see the Clearnefs nor Sanctity of Reason, it was a very wholesome Establishment; to leave our glimmering Sight, sullied with the Dust of Humanity, to be conducted towards the Light of Truth by Authority. (o) Isidore Pelusiote declares he knows clearly that he knows Nothing, according to the Maxim of Socrates.

In the Council of Nice, that which was said by a Layman was applauded with universal Consent, viz. that Jesus Christ and the Apostles have not taught us the Subtilties of Logick, and the Niceties of Reasoning, but a clear and pure Doctrine, which is preserved by Faith, and good Works. When they

(n) Augustin. de Mor. Eccles. Cath. CAP. 2.
Isidore Pelus. lib. 3. Epist. 241.

(o) Isi-

were to judge of the Doctrine of *Arius*, *Alexander* Bishop of *Constantinople* had Recourse to the *Grace* of God only, and despised the Refinements of *Logick*. Lastly, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, the celebrated Dictator of the School, pronounced, that our Minds are so hampered by the Senses, they cannot comprehend Things perfectly, and their Imbecility is so great, that if they would judge of Matters which are certain in themselves, they will become uncertain.





CHAP. III.

The SECOND PROOF.

Man cannot know with perfect and intire Certainty, that an external Object answers exactly to the Idea imprinted in him. 1. Images, Forms, or Shadows, which flow from external Bodies, and present themselves to us, are not like them. 2. The Truth of the interposed Medium, through which the Shadow or Species passes, to come to the Instruments of our Sensation, is dubious. 3. The Certainty of the Senses dubious. 4. The Fidelity of the Nerves, and the Animal Spirits, dubious. 5. The Fidelity of the Brain dubious. 6. The Fidelity of the Mind or human Understanding dubious, and its Nature to us unknown.

BUT it must be shewed from the Nature of Things, that Man cannot know *Truth* by Reason, with perfect Certainty. I have said above that

Truth is the Agreement of the external *Object*, with the Judgment which our Understanding forms of it, in View of the *Idea* of that *Object*, which is in us. But Man cannot be certain of this Conformity, unless he is assured beforehand, that the *Species*, or Image, which proceeds from that external *Object*, of what Nature soever it be, is the true Image of that *Object*. He must moreover be certain that this *Species*, or *Image*, is conveyed whole and intire to the Instruments of the Senses, without having received any Alteration by the Interposition of Things it meets by the Way. Then he must know with Certainty, that the Instruments of the Senses after they have been moved by this *Species* or *Image*, and advertised the Brain of that Motion, by Means of the *Fibres* of the Body, were sure and faithful Messengers, and made no Alteration in the true State of the Thing, of which they gave a Report. It is farther necessary he be assured, that when the Brain excited by this Advertisement, makes known to the *Soul* joined to it, the Advice it has received, gives in its Report *bonâ Fide*, without any Alteration of the State of Things. And lastly, Man ought to know certainly, that the Judgment

ment which his *Soul* forms upon this Report of the Brain, is just and sure. All these Things are of such a Nature, that what Pains soever the most subtle *Philosopher* may take, he cannot alledge any Proof of the Certainty of them. And on the contrary we have more Reasons to doubt of the Conformity of the *Image*, or *Species*, of the external *Object*, with that *Object*, of the Truth of the interposed *Medium* by which this *Species* passes, to come to the Instrument of Sense; of the Truth of the Senses, of the Truth of the Brain, and the Perception of our *Souls*.

1. For first of all, who will venture to say, that the *Image*, *Shadow*, or *Species*, which issues from the external Body, which presents it self before us, is the true Resemblance of it without any Difference? I don't examine here, what this *Image* is; for that Inquiry belongs not to this Place; in the mean time I make Use of the Opinions and Terms, commonly taught in the *Schools* of *Philosophers*. By what Art, what Industry can my Understanding, which judges of this Resemblance, compare an external *Object* with its *Image*; since both one and the other are out of my Understanding; since this *Image* cannot be

The Images, Species, or Shadows, which proceed from external Bodies, that present themselves before our Eyes, do not resemble them.

Of the WEAKNESS of

stayed to be considered, and some have doubted even whether it exists?

Let us suppose however that it may be considered, and we may give our Judgment of it; we shall doubtless find them very unlike. The *Form*, or *Image*, which comes from a Tree, is that a Tree? and if it be not a Tree, can it resemble a Tree? For we use the Word *Resemblance* improperly, when we say that a Picture, or Statue resembles its Original. The true and perfect *Resemblance* we are upon, is not that which only represents the external Figure, Size, and Colour, but all the Properties of the entire Body, and the Parts which compose it, as well internal as external. To which if there be any Thing wanting, there will be in that Respect a Defect of *Resemblance* in it, and we shall not know the outward *Object* as it really is. Now the *Species*, or *Image*, of this Tree is different from the Tree in many Things. The Tree is visible, without Motion, and Solid; its *Species*, or *Image*, is not visible, has no Consistence, and is very moveable, very thin, and very fluid.

The
Truth of the
interposed
Medium, by

2. But although I should grant that the *Image* or *Species* of the outward *Object*, does absolutely resemble it, it will

will be nevertheless true by an Infinity of Experiences, that the *Medium* this *Species* passes through, which issues from the *Object*, to come and move the Organ of Sense, is very variable, and subject to change. Let us take, for Example, the *Image* or *Species* of the Colour of an *Object*, which strikes the Sight. The Colour we see in *Objects* at Even, is different from that we see at Noon. The Colour we see by the Light of the *Sun*, is different from that we see by the Light of a *Flambeaux*.

which the Shadow, or Species passes to come to the Instruments of our Sense, is dubious.

If in a close Chamber we set *Brandy* on Fire, and temper it with Salt; or burn *Brimstone* in a new Cup, as *Anaxilaus* the Physician did for his Diversion, says *Pliny* (a), the Faces of those who are present, will appear pale, of a Cadaverous Hue, and we shall think we see dead Bodies walk. Houses seem to tremble, when we look on them through Smoke. We see a great Variety of Colours in the *Objects*, which are near us. If we look upon the same at a great Distance, they will all appear of one Colour, which is ordinarily blue, like that of the Sea, and the Sky,

(a) Plin Lib. xxv. Cap. 15.

Of the W E A K E S S of

although neither the one nor the other is blue. For this Blueness changes according to the Diversity of the Wind, and the Sea is sometimes of a purple, and sometimes of a yellow Colour. Those vast Bodies of the *Stars*, whose Magnitude we know by *Mathematicks*, how small do they appear to our Eyes? Is there any Need to add the Example of the Oar of a Boat, which, though really straight, seems to be broke at the Part of it, which is between the Air and the Water? Or that of stained Glasses, which impart their Colours to *Species*, or Images, of external Bodies? That of *Glass Prisms*, which though composed of three flat Faces, or Sides and of a Matter uniform, clear, and transparent, if we place them near the Eye, they will make all external *Objects* appear round, and painted with an agreeable Variety of Colours: or that of Leaves of Gold, which although yellow, appear green, when we hold them between the Eye and the Light.

The same may be said of Sounds, and Odours, which seem to be different according to the different *Medium*, through which they pass to come to us. It is indubitable then that these *Species*, Shadows, or Images of external Bodies are

are subject to infinite Changes, according to the Variety or Alteration of the *Medium*.

3. Let us suppose nevertheless, that the *Species*, or to speak with *Apuleius* (b), those *cast off-Cloaths*, which flow incessantly from Bodies, are received by our Senses without any Alteration, how many Proofs have been brought by *Philosophers*, to convince us of the Deception of our Senses? I shall only instance one, which I take to be unanswerable.

The Fidelity of the Senses dubious.

It is certain that Sense depends on the Instruments of Sense. We perceive Things otherwise, when the *Organs* of the Senses are sound and vigorous, than we do when they are indisposed. Many Things were to our Relish during our Youth, which are distasteful to us in our advanced Age. There are many to whom *Objects* appear greater, when they look on them with one Eye; and smaller, when they look on them with the other. Since the Diversity of the Senses is so great, that we cannot find a Conformity in them, even in one and the same Person, we must own that this Diversity is much greater still in that

(b) *Apul. Apol. i.*

Multitude of Men, whose Bodies, and Instruments of Sense which depend on Bodies, are so very unlike. For if the Difference of the Aspects of Men is so great, that Nature seems to sport with it, or to try her Fecundity; and that in so great a Number of Men, we cannot find two who perfectly resemble each other, can we believe they differ in Nothing as to the internal Conformation of their Bodies, since their outward Figures are so different? If we are silly enough to think so, Physicians will laugh at us, who having dissected human Bodies, find so great Diversity in the Parts within.

It must be acknowledged then that our Senses do not perceive external *Objects*, but only the Impression of the *Species*, or Images, which proceed from the Outside of Things, and that this Impression which comes from without, does not produce the same Effect in all Men, but is different according to the different Instruments of the Senses; as Sounds differ, according to the different Thickness, and Tension of the Strings which occasion them; and therefore we cannot know, which of all the *Sensations*, produced in different Persons by one and the same external *Object*, differs most from that *Object*. This

This is what the *Satyrift* has elegantly expressed in these Words: *Our Eyes deceive us, and the Uncertainty of our Senses imposes on our Reason. A Steeple which seems to be square when I look on it near, seems to be round at a Distance. A Man who has enough of it, nauseates Honey, and the Nose has often an Aversion to Perfumes. One Thing would not please us more than another, if the Senses were not in a perpetual Contrast.*

4. Let us go on in an easie Manner, as we have begun; and suppose yet that the Testimony of the Senses is faithful, when they receive from without the *Species*, or Images, that carry with them a certain and particular Denotation of the external *Object*, from whence they proceed; and such as they cannot carry from the external *Object*, from whence they did not proceed; which *Zeno* thought necessary for the Knowledge of *Truth*: yet who will be answerable for the Verdict of the Senses, when they report to the Understanding the *Sensations* which they had? since for that Purpose they make Use of the *Fibres* of the Nerves, whose Conformation being very different, as Anatomists and Physicians have observed, it follows that

The Fidelity of the Nerves, and the animal Spirits, dubious.

Of the WEAKNESS of

that the Reports they make to the Understanding cannot be uniform. They use likewise the Animal Spirits, which are not in the same Quantity, and whose Motions are very different in all Men.

I know *Descartes* believed, and has made a great many believe so too, that the Animal Spirits go from the Brain into the Cavity of the Nerves, and diffuse themselves around the internal *Fibres* of the Nerves, and serve to excite Motion in the Muscles; that these *Fibres* are like very fine Threads, and joyned together in Form of Cords, which extend themselves every Way even to the Extremity of the external Members, and assist the Instruments of Sense; insomuch that being moved, or shaken by the *Species* or Image of the external *Object*, the *Fibres* adjoyned to these Instruments are moved also; and as they are encompassed and swelled by these Animal Spirits, they carry to the Brain with great Celerity that Motion imprinted on them in the Extremities, and external Parts of our Body. As when we touch an extended Cord at one of its Extremities, the other End shakes almost at the same time.

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For my own Part, who by many Dissections I have made of the Bodies of living Creatures, know clearly that the Nerves, which are disperfed through the whole Body, how much foever they may be fwelled by the Animal Spirits, are yet very flack and crooked, turn in and out in many different Manners, easily lengthen and shorten themselves by the Movement of the Part whereto they are annexed, I cannot comprehend how they resemble an extended Cord, and with so much Celerity convey to the Brain that Movement which was impressed on them in one of their Extremities. Let us suppose however this may be done in some Manner, it is most certain that the Animal Spirits are much more proper for this Office; for being, as they are, subtile, and of incomparable Levity, and filling the Cavity of the Nerve, it is easie to comprehend that the Motion imprinted on them from without, may be carried immediately to the Brain. For though the Cavities which contain these Spirits are as sinuous, and as much twisted in and out as one would have them to be, yet they keep their Disposition and Form. As a Man blowing a Trumpet bent round, if when he puts his

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his Mouth to one of the Holes, he applies his Hand to the other, will find that the Hand is pushed by the Air within, as soon as that internal Air is pushed by his Breath.

This Opinion is not hurt by the Experience which has been sometimes made of a Palsy, that had deprived a Member of Motion, without depriving it of Feeling, for this Member received Motion, when a great Quantity of Spirits was conveyed into its Muscles by the Nerves. And if the Brain does not furnish such a Quantity of Spirits as is necessary to swell up these Muscles, or if these Muscles do not receive them, and there are no more Spirits remaining than just necessary to fill the Nerves, and not enough to swell the Muscles, Feeling then will remain without Motion. 'Tis possible too that as there are many hidden *Fibres* in the Cavity of the Nerve, some may be designed to furnish the Muscles with Spirits, and to convey them to the Extremities of the Body, and form Motion. As the Blood being carried from the Heart to the Extremities by the *Arteries*, is conveyed back by the *Veins* to the Heart again. But this in passing. Let us only add to what has been said, that

that the Spirits sometimes are so agitated by Sickneſs, Sleep, Wine, and other Cauſes, and the *Fibres* of the Brain ſo violently ſhaken, that it receives divers Impreſſions thereby; inſomuch that the Underſtanding ſometimes thinks it has certain *Senſations*, which the Inſtruments of the Senſes never had.

5. Beſides; the Brain, which is the Citadel of the Soul, the Laboratory of Reason, the Operator of Perception, as is ſuppoſed; has it the ſame Form and Structure in all Men? Do we not ſee it leſs in ſome, and greater in others? The Conformation of the Head, which is a certain Sign of that of the Brain, is ſo different in Men, that whole Nations have Heads round, others long, ſome pointed, and many flat. We know that the Excellence of Wit, the Strength and the Fidelity of the Memory, proceeds from the Conformation and Condition of the Brain and the Head.

The Fidelity of the Brain is dubious.

'Tis a Maxim of the Philoſopher *Parmenides* (c), that the Diſpoſition of Man's Underſtanding, depends on the Diſpoſition of the Parts of the Body. Experience, confirmed by a common *French* Proverb, tells us that thoſe who

(c) *Parmenides*, apud *Arist. Metaph. Lib. iii. Cap. 3.*

have

have great Heads, are ordinarily People of great Sense, and that the Smallness of the Head is accompanied with little Wit. *Hippocrates* (d) says, the Nation of the *Macrocephali*, (that is to say, of the Long Heads) perswaded that the Length of the Head contributed to the Valour of Man, made an Engine to lengthen the Heads of their Children, and that Nature in Time being obedient to Art, gave this Figure to the Heads of all the People. There is a Nation in *America*, who take Care to form the Heads of their Children pointed like a *Sugar-Loaf*, which is consummate Folly, and near to Madness.

The Head of *Thersites*, the Man *Homer* represents to us so silly and foolish, was of this Form. From hence comes that Proverb, *So many Heads, so many Minds*: For from this Diversity of Organs, necessary to give us the Sense of external *Objects*; *Fibres*, *Spirits*, *Brains*, *Heads*, and from their Differences, arises that great Diversity of Opinions, which is found among Men. From hence it comes that they are so unsettled in their Judgments, reject in their advanced Age, what they admired

(d) *Hippocr. de Aq. Aer. & Locis. Sect. 3.*

in their Youth; that often in the Space of one Day, and sometimes of one Hour, the same Man changes his Opinion and Inclinations, contradicts, and plunges himself into so great a Variety of Desires.

6. But if all these *Organs*, which are so fallible, were of unquestionable Fidelity, we should not for that Reason be better instructed in the Manner of the Soul's perceiving the *Species*, or Images, imprinted in the Brain, or in the Manner whereby it judges of Things it has perceived, or in that lastly whereby these *Species* purely corporeal and material, can make themselves known to the Soul, which is incorporeal and immaterial.

The Fidelity of human Spirit or Understanding, dubious, and its Nature unknown to us.

Since then we know not in what Manner, that Impression made in the Brain can reach the Soul, and since the Soul in the mean time feels its self moved, and affected in some Measure by the Brain, which was affected it self by a corporeal Motion, so as to conceive the external *Object* in a certain Measure, as for Example, to conceive the *Sun* to be like a luminous and shining *Dish*, it will be uncertain whether this same Figure be in the Eye, or a Figure different from it. Nay, on

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the contrary the Soul is convinced, that the Image of the Sun represents it self inverted in the Eye; although it finds in it an Idea of the Sun that is not inverted. It is likewise convinced that all the Objects which come to her by the Report of the Eyes, represent themselves in it in a Situation contrary to what they are represented in the Eyes; that what appears to it to be the Top of a Thing, is the Bottom in the Eye, and what appears to be on the right, is on the left Side in the Eye.

The Soul is likewise uncertain, whether the Image which comes from the Sun, be like that represented in the Eye. Neither does it know, whether any Image of the Sun be represented in the Eye, or whether it self forms not that Idea on the Traces imprinted in the Brain before: as in those Ideas Men have in Sleep, Distraction, Drunkenness, and which at the same Time have no Reality; and moreover as in the Ideas we form our selves, when awake, in our Senses, and sober.

Besides, it has been fought even to this Hour, by infinite Disquisitions, and Disputes, what the Nature of our Understanding is, the most noble Faculty of the Soul; in what Part of our Body placed,

placed, what its Action is, whether it has no Ideas, but by the Ministry, and Message of the Senses, and whether Nature did not imprint them in its first Formation. That Diversity of Opinions also found among Men, the Difference of their Ideas, and Ways of conceiving Things, which are the Operations of the Understanding, shews us clearly, how variable, uncertain; and unknown the Nature of it is. Now all these Disputes and Questions touching the Understanding, cannot be decided but by the Understanding it self, which being of a dubious Nature, how shall a dubious Thing be decided and determined by a Thing which is dubious? Can the Taste relish it self? The Smelling smell it self? The Sight see it self?

Rightly and perfectly to comprehend the Nature of the Understanding, another Understanding is certainly necessary: For there is no *Faculty* in us besides to do it by. If it be unknown to us then, and we are ignorant of its Operations, with what Assurance can we make Use of a Thing unknown to us, for the Perception of other Things which are as much unknown? Or what Credit can we give to Things we perceive by Means thereof?

Of the W E A K N E S S of

Since the *Species*, or Images of external *Objects*, that are the Cause of the *Ideas* which are formed in us are subject to so many Alterations; since our bodily Senses are so obtuse and dull; their *Organs* so weak; the Nature of human Understanding so obscure, what Knowledge can we promise our selves of the Conformity and Agreement between the external *Object* which presents it self to us, and the *Idea* of that *Object* imprinted in our Soul?



C H A P. IV.

The T H I R D P R O O F.

Human Understanding cannot know the Nature of things with perfect Certainty.

WE have still behind a very clear Proof of the Ignorance which is natural to us, in that the *Essence* of Things is incomprehensible to human Mind. For since I have now proved that Nature has formed us in such a Sort, as not to be able to acquire a certain Knowledge of external *Objects*, though

though this ought to suffice to take from us all Hope of knowing *Truth* with Certainty by Reason: if I shew farther, that the *Essence* and Nature of Things, and even of Man himself is such, that he cannot know it, the Confidence of human Understanding will have no Foundation to support it, because I shall have made appear then, that Man is not capable of knowing Things with Certainty and Evidence; and likewise that by their Nature they cannot be known to Man certainly and evidently, which I prove thus.

It is impossible to know the *Essence* of a Thing, unless we know wherein it agrees, and differs from other Things: that is to say, if we know not its *Genus* and *Differentia*. For *Philosophers* agree, that herein consists the *Essence* of Things, and that the best Definition we can give of them, is, by their *Genus* and *Differentia*. If then the *Genus* and *Differentia* of Things cannot be known, we can neither know their Definition nor *Essence*. Now we cannot know the *Genus* of a Thing, that is to say, in what it agrees with another of a different *Species*, if we know not the *Essence* of both. It is then necessary to know the *Essence* of that Thing,

of which we would know the *Genus*. But we have now said that to know the *Essence* of that Thing, we must know its *Genus* first; so that *Essence* and *Genus* have Need one of the other to be known, and the Knowledge of the one depends on the Knowledge of the other. We must thereby fall into a *Circle*, which is a Sort of defective Reasoning, and proves nothing.

What I have now said of *Genus*, ought to be said of *Differentia*: for I cannot know in what one Thing differs from another, unless I know them both. This will be clear by an Example.

Ask the *Professors* of *Philosophy* what Man is, they will tell you he is a *rational Animal*. Here is the *Genus*, and the *Differentia*. Now the *Genus* ought to be equally common to the *Species* which are comprized under that *Genus*. Man then ought to be an *Animal* in the same Manner, as a Horse is an *Animal*. For if Man is an *Animal* in another Manner than a Horse, there will be a Difference in the *Genus* even as *Genus*, and so there will be no *Genus*. But how do you know that a Man and a Horse are equally *Animals*, if you know not the Nature of them both,

both, and perfectly what an Animal is? and this is no less uncertain. For if you ask the same *Professors* what an *Animal* is, they will answer it is that which lives and feels; has Life and Sense. But how can you know, *my dear Masters*, whether a Man and a Horse feel in all Points alike; whether the *Sensation* of a Man be intirely the same as that of a Horse?

Des-Cartes, that new Inventer of Truth, maintains (if we will believe him) that the Horse feels the Spurs which prick him, no more than the Tree does the Ax which cuts it. Besides, we see certain Plants which give Signs of Sense, when touched, and are not *Animals* notwithstanding: nor consequently is a Horse. Add hereto, we see a Horse, a Man; but do not see an *Animal*, but when we see a Horse, a Man, a Fish, a Bird, or some other *Animal*. We know not *Animal* then, which is the *Genus*, but by its *Species*: seek to this very Hour to know the *Species* by *Genus*; and fall thereby into that vicious Kind of Reasoning, called *Dialeth*, that is to say alternatory; when to prove a Thing in Question, we make use of another, whose Proof depends on the very Thing in Question.

Moreover, since to know the *Essence* of a Thing, we must know its *Genus*; to know the *Essence* of the *Genus*, we must know its *Genus*; and the *Genus* of that *Genus*, and so always ascend. Thus the Thing will be infinite, and we shall never arrive to the Knowledge of what we seek; or at best must stop at some superior *Genus*, of whose *Genus* we are ignorant. But if we know not the *Genus* of that superior *Genus*, we likewise know not that superior *Genus*, nor consequently any other *Genus* which depends on it, nor the Thing it self in Question. Let us proceed now to *Differentia*, which with *Genus* composes the *Essence* of Man.

This *Differentia* is taken from his Reason, with which it is pretended he is endowed. Now that is the very Thing in Question in our present Inquiry, namely; if Man be endowed with Reason, and whether he can reason. Since we are not assured he can do so, we are not assured he is a rational *Animal*, nor that Reason is his *Differentia*. Let us suppose nevertheless he is rational, are we assured he is of all *Animals* the only one which is so?

We have Writings of some great *Philosophers*, who maintain that Reason is found

found likewise among other *Animals*. No-Body can decide this Contest, if he is ignorant what Man is ; and what those other *Animals* are. We must then return to the Matter in Question ; namely what is Man, and then we seek in a Thing unknown, the Knowledge of what is unknown, without being able to extricate our selves out of this Perplexity.



C H A P. V.

The F O U R T H P R O O F.

Things cannot be known with perfect Certainty, by Reason of their continual Change.

THERE is still another and that a most manifest Cause, which prevents our Knowledge of Things, *viz.* the continual Mutability they are subject to: and this Mutability is such, that they cannot remain in the same State, no not for the least Space of Time. To express this continual Change of Bodies, the ancient *Philosophers* made use of the Comparison of a River, very applicable to our Subject. For *Heraclitus* well

well observed, that no Person ever enter'd twice into the same River; because the Waters which flow'd yesterday from that Place of the River where he went in, are since gone, and other succeed, which flow there now: and the *Philosopher Cratylus* maintain'd with no less truth, that we cannot so much as enter once into the same River: in like manner your Horse that carries you now, and which you think you know, is not the same which carried you yesterday, but another; and that you rode on but a Moment ago, is not the same Horse but another. Time has taken off one Part of him. His Flesh, Bones, Skin, Hair are changed, by the Nourishment he has received, the Excrements he has voided, by Increase, Respiration, Perspiration, external and internal Heat, by the Deprædation of the Air that surrounds him, and the Spirits he loses: the Accession of supervening Matter repairing the Loss of that which went from him.

For this Reason *Plato*, and all the ancient *Philosophers* he quotes in his *Theætetus*; namely *Empedocles*, *Heraclitus*, *Protagoras*, and the greater Part of other *Philosophers*, (unless you except *Parmenides*) and those celebrated Poets,
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Homer and *Epicharmus*, who have been followed by (a) *Seneca*, said that all Things are, but not one of them exists, in such Sort as we may say it is sure and fixed. From whence it follows that when I apply my self to attain the Knowledge of a Thing, it will cease to be what it was, before my Mind can set about the Work. This obliged the *Philosopher Cratylus* to affirm, we must be silent. Now seeing *Universals*, so called, are composed of Things particular and singular, and since we cannot know particular Things, because they escape us by this continual Flux and Mutability, we cannot know the *Universals* which are composed of them.

This Reasoning had so great an Effect upon *Saint (b) Augustine*, that he drew this Consequence from it: Namely; *we must not expect the perfect Knowledge of Truth from our Senses.* And *Aristotle (c)* disposed to answer this Reasoning, did it in a Manner so frivolous, that he has even confirmed it. Let us proceed farther yet.

Since all Things are subject to Change, so must I; and change from Moment

(a) *Seneca* Epist. 58. (b) *Augustine*. Quæst. 83. Quæst. 9. (c) *Aristot.* Metaph. lib. iii. CAP. 5.

to Moment, every Hour. Whilst I speak, I become another Man; and although this Alteration does not plainly appear in a little Time, we easily know it soon after. How then shall Man, so changeable, variable and inconstant in himself, judge assuredly of all other Things?



C H A P. VI.

The F I F T H P R O O F.

Things cannot be known with perfect Certainty, by Reason of the Difference of Men.

IF Men are so subject to Mutability, that not one of them is consistent with himself for a very small Space, there must be an infinite Difference in the great Multitude of Men, as I have already observed. From this great Variety, what Congruity of Judgment, what Conformity and Steadiness of Opinions can we expect? How shall I know that what seems to me to be white, is so to you? and that the Colour, which
you

you and I call white, seems to you and me to be one and the same Colour?

Since Things then may appear different to Men, or at least we cannot know whether they appear to them alike, in this great Multitude, who see things differently, or know not whether they may see them in one and the same Manner; which shall we think, perceives them, as they truly are in themselves? and in a Discord so universal, shew me the Rule of *Truth* wherein all Men shall acquiesce?

The Poet *Euripides* was well acquainted with this Defect of human Nature, when he made *Eteocles* say, that
(d) *Amongst Men Nothing is equal, nor alike, except the Names of things, but that Things themselves have Nothing in them permanent nor sure.*

The Philosopher *Protagoras* acknowledged it likewise, and said every one is a Rule of Truth to himself. But I may add moreover, that no Man can be so, by Reason of this Dissimilitude I have now spoke of, not only of all Men from one another, but of every Man from himself. This Matter is excellently handled by *Plato* in his *Theætetus*,

(d) *Euripid.* Phœniss. vi. 504. 505.

Of the W E A K N E S S of
and by *Sextus Empiricus*. (e) They
both deserve to be consulted.



C H A P. VII.

The SIXTH PROOF.

*Things cannot be known with perfect
Certainty, because their Causes are
infinite.*

TO these we must join the following
Proofs, *viz.* All Things of this
World are so connected, we cannot
conceive one without conceiving ano-
ther; nor that other without a third;
nor that third without a fourth, 'till car-
rying our Mind along, we have run
through the Infinity of Things, where-
of this World is composed. But human
Understanding not being by its Nature
capable of knowing all, and unable to
know any thing without that Know-
ledge, it can consequently know No-
thing.

I would, for Instance, know what Man
is, as composed of Body and Soul, and

(e) *Sext. Empir. Pyrrhon. Hypot. lib. I. CAP. 14.*

endow'd with Reason; I cannot attain this unless I understand the Nature of his Body, Soul, and Reason. The Body of Man being compos'd of *Fire, Air, Water* and *Earth*; it is necessary to be thoroughly acquainted with the Nature of these *Elements*, to be qualified to know that of Man. I begin with *Fire*, and to understand it, apply my self to the search of what *Philosophers* have thought thereon. I consult *Des-Cartes*, and cannot learn from him what the Nature of *Fire* is, if I am not exactly instructed in the *System* of the World which he has invented. Neither is it enough to be thoroughly acquainted with that, I must examine, and compare it with the *Systems* of other *Philosophers*, and afterwards judge which of all these is true. To be able to do this well, I must ascend again to the Knowledge of first Causes, which have hitherto been unknown.

When I shall have sought out the Nature of *Fire*, I must pass to that of *Air*, and afterwards to that of *Water*, and lastly to that of *Earth*; and in each of these Enquiries we shall find the same Difficulties. From hence we must proceed to the Fabrick of a human Body, its Structure, and Uses of the Parts

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which

Of the WEAKNESS *of*

which compose it: Matter of infinite Labour and Study, each of these Things, after all the Disputes and Experiences of so many Years, remains in Obscurity.

We must examine likewise, how the Body of Man is produced; an important and difficult Inquiry, that of Generation, and the Causes of Generation; what the Father, what the Mother contribute to it; from whence they derive the Faculty of engendring; how the Infant is formed in the Mother's Belly, how nourished there, what gives him Strength and Industry to get out of that Prison; whether a Man may be engendered without Father or Mother, as some have believed; why a Male comes to be born, why a Female; why the Production is flat nosed, why curl'd hair'd, why little and low, why choleric, why addicted to Women, why a great Eater, why drunken, why healthy, why of long life. See what a Number of Articles must be known in this Matter.

But supposing they may be known, behold other inexplicable Difficulties arise, touching the Nature of Man's Soul; what it is, whence it is, how it acts, what are the Effects of its Action, and how joined to the Body. When we have discovered all this, we must afterwards

wards see what Reason is, its Uses and Effects. This Inquiry will engage you in the Study of all Parts of the *Dialectick* Art. The Thing would be infinite to enumerate, if we could, all Sciences necessary for attaining to that of Man; and Life would not suffice, for acquiring the Knowledge of the least Part of what we must know to understand some thing of it. We had better then rest contented, and not undertake a useless Labour.



C H A P. VIII.

THE SEVENTH PROOF.

Man has no certain Rule of Truth.

THE Want of a certain *Rule* of *Truth*, which God has denied human Nature, is an invincible, and capital Proof against the Temerity of the *Dogmatists*. For as all things are blended with Truth and Falshood, it is difficult for us to distinguish them, and being so frequently deceived, how can we make this Distinction, without we can apply to it such a certain *Rule of Truth*, as

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will

will undoubtedly make known to us, that what agrees to it, shall be true ; and the contrary false. For which Reason, those who addicted themselves to the Search of *Truth*, to whom the Name of *Philosophers* has been given, employed their utmost Sagacity to find out that *Rule*. Gave it the Name of CRITERIUM, and divided it into two Kinds; one for the *Rule* of Actions, the other of Opinions: All our Life to be conducted by the first, and all our Knowledge to depend on the second: which being well established, we shall have Means to distinguish Truth from Falseness: and this is what is called the *Rule*, or Κριτήριον of *Truth*.

This *Criterion* may be taken divers Ways, but at present we are in Search of that only which is properly the Measure of Comprehension, or Perception; by Means of which Measure, and proceeding in it with Art, we may comprehend Things obscure. We speak here only of that Sort of *Criterion*, or *Rule* of *Truth*, which makes Use of Reason to acquire the Knowledge of *Truth*.

This *Criterion* is divided into three Kinds, the *Criterion of which*, the *Criterion by which*, and the *Criterion according to which*. The *Criterion of which*,

which, is Man ; for the Point is the Knowledge of *Truth*, which Man would acquire. The *Criterion by which*, are the Instruments that Man makes use of to know *Truth*, as the Senses, or the Understanding. And the *Criterion according to which*, is the Action of human Mind, which applies the *Criterion by which*, to the Search of *Truth*.

Others have already proved by most evident Reasons, that these three Kinds of *Criterion* are uncertain, and useless to the Discovery of *Truth*. For since the Nature of Man is to us unknown, having been sought for in Vain by so much Study, and so many Contests of *Philosophers* ; it is moreover much more unknown to us, whether it be capable of knowing *Truth*. The *Criterion of which*, namely human Nature, is then uncertain.

If it be so, as the Thing speaks itself, it follows that the *Criterion by which*, is still more uncertain, I mean the Senses of Man, or the Impressions they receive, or their intimate Touches, or Fancy, which is otherwise called Imagination ; that is to say, an Impression or Impulse made in the Soul by an external Object, or a Modification of the Understanding, which the *Latin Philosophers*

phers call *Visum*. The Understanding likewise, which others would have to be the *Criterion by which*; or Reason, according to many, which is a Faculty of the Understanding; all this is equally uncertain. For we cannot know the Faculties of a Nature which is unknown.

The Faculties being unknown, the Actions are so no less: and in these consists the *Criterion according to which*. I have not undertook to relate every Thing here which makes for this *Subject*, for we have more Business upon our Hands, than to insist long on the same *Topicks*: especially seeing few are ignorant, of what has been accustomed to be said in the Schools of *Philosophy* on the *Deception* of the Senses, and of the Understanding: for there is Nothing that the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* do value themselves more upon. I shall propose some Arguments only, which sap all the Credit that can be given to *Rules of Truth* or CRITERIUM.

Since to know *Truth*, we must have a *Criterion*, or *Rule of Truth*, it is necessary to find it, before we search for the Knowledge of *Truth*. Now to find this CRITERIUM, we must know how to discover the true CRITERIUM of
Falshood.

Falshood. For that End we ought to enquire before-hand, whether the true CRITERIUM has certain Characters of Truth, by which we may, and without which we cannot know *Truth*. And how shall we know those Characters of Truth, if we know not *Truth*? We must then have found *Truth* before we can find the CRITERIUM, and must have found the CRITERIUM before we can find TRUTH; and since we have neither found *Truth* nor the CRITERIUM, it follows that we cannot find one nor the other.

Besides, since the CRITERIUM is the *Rule of Truth*; we must have adjusted this *Rule*, and be assured that it is right, before we apply it to Truth; for if it is not right, and we are not certain it is so, it will not be safe, and we cannot confide in it. Now we know not how to adjust it, nor be assured it is right, if we have not another *Rule of Truth*, which is certainly true, and which may serve to rectify the first. This second to be well rectified, must be regulated on a third, and this third on a fourth, and so to Infinity. These Matters have been explained at large by the *Philosopher Sextus Empiricus*, a Man of Subtilty and Penetration, who has

better humbled the Pride of the *Dogmatists* than any one. But I am satisfied to touch the Thing summarily.



CHAP. IX.

The EIGHTH PROOF.

1. *Arguments against Evidence.* 2. *The Objects which present themselves to the Minds of those who are asleep, drunk or mad, are as evident as those that are present to the Minds of Men, who are awake, fasting, and in their right Senses.*

*Arguments
against E-
vidence.*

1. **A**LL those who boast of being able to obtain the Knowledge of *Truth*, by means of a *Rule of Truth*, or **CRITERIUM**, agree that besides this, it is necessary to have an evident and distinct Perception of Things, either by the Senses, or Reason, or some other Way, whatever it may be; so that the Understanding to comprehend any Thing, has Need of a distinct and evident *Idea* of it. This is the Language of all the *Dogmatists*; wherein they don't perceive, that thereby they render the Knowledge of

of *Truth* still more difficult, and instead of one CRITERIUM, require two; namely the *Idea* of the Thing, and the Evidence of that *Idea*. But if we admit there is no CRITERIUM, as I have now proved, it follows that *Evidence* which depends on CRITERIUM, will have no Being. Add to this, that Nothing is evident but what is so to all the World. For if no-Body will receive for evident, but what appears so to him, true and false will be equally evident; for each of those who shall have contrary Opinions, will alledge *Evidence* for Proof of his Opinion; and Nothing is so evident as to appear so to all, and by Consequence there is no *Evidence*.

Wherein we cannot wonder enough at the Imprudence of those *Philosophers*, who boasting they have *Evidence* with them, do not see what is most evident; namely; that the *Evidence* is fallacious, which equally undertakes the Defence of opposite Sides, and lends its Assistance to each against the other; and that we can never reap any Advantage from this Assistance, till such time as *Philosophers* agree, and all unite in one and the same Sect. Can any-Body have Presumption enough, how clear and distinct soever his Notions may be, to be-

lieve that he is the only wise Man in the World, and all others are Fools? Does not *Evidence* frequently deceive one and the same Person, who finds a thing evidently false in his advanced Years, which appeared to him to be evidently true in his Youth?

Let us hear what *Sophocles* says: (a) *never did two Men who were Friends, nor two People in Alliance, continue in the same Sentiments. For the one sooner, the other later, finds the same Things sweet and bitter.* Let us add these Words of *Terence*: (b) *Never did Man so well regulate his Life by Reason, but the State of Things, Time and Use, offered him Somewhat of new Instruction, making him perceive he was ignorant of what he thought he knew, and sensible that what he had believed to be most desirable, ought to be rejected.* But of all *Evidences*, which shall we follow? Shall it be that of Infancy, Manhood, or advanced Age? *Dionysius* of *Heraclea*, who overcome by Pain, passed from the Sect of the *Stoicks* to that of the *Epicureans*, and was therefore surnamed the *Turn-Coat*, whilst he stuck to the *Stoical* Party did he find Obscurity and Confusion in all things?

2. 1

(a) *Sophocl. Ædip. Tyr. vers. 639, & seq.*
Adelph. Sc. 4. Act. 5.

(b) *Terent.*

2. I say moreover, that what appears to the Mind in Sleep, Drunkenness, and Madness, has not less *Evidence*, than what appears to us while we are awake, fasting and in our right Senses. When Men awake, when their Drunkenness is over, or when recover'd of Madness, they acknowledge indeed they were then in Error, but did not perceive it at all in the time of Sleep, Wine or Distraction. We doubt likewise sometimes in sleeping, whether we are awake, or asleep; and after we have reflected on it, believe we are awake, and see with perfect Evidence, what appears then to the Mind.

The Objects which present themselves to the Minds of those who are asleep, drunk, or mad, are as evident as those which are present to the Minds of Men who are awake, fasting and in their right Senses.

That mad-Man of *Argos*, who imagin'd he was at a Play, and clapp'd his Hands before an empty Theatre, did he not believe he clearly saw and heard the Gesture and Recital of the Players? The Extravagancies of the distracted, their Fears, Flights, Transports, are not those Indications of a Spirit evidently and violently agitated by the *Images* of Things which present themselves to it? Have not Persons answered directly to Questions put to them? Others made very fine Verses, and some walked on the Tops of Houses with great Caution when asleep? which they could not have

have done, had they not been excited by the clearest *Ideas*? Those who believe they assist in the nocturnal Assemblies of *Sorcerers*, have they not the most clear *Ideas* of Things very false and frivolous? and who being awake, will not acknowledge that they were asleep, when those *Visions* passed through their Minds; and think they saw them so certainly as to imagine those who contradict them, to be asleep themselves, or not in their right Senses.

Since the *Images* which present themselves to us in Sleep, how clear soever they may appear, are nevertheless most false, how can we know, whether our being awake is not another Kind of Sleep, during which the *Images* of Things that appear to our Minds, whatever Light they may be invested with, are notwithstanding vain and false? *Plato* in his *Theætetus* has formed this Doubt as I have done. Those are very much deceived, who think they have found a sure Sign, to discover the Falsity of Dreams; namely, in that they have no Relation to the Things, we have done when awake: For if by Chance they have Relation thereto, there will be no Sign which may serve to distinguish them. But it
may

may very easily fall out that there may be a Relation between them. As for Example; if I dream when asleep, that I rehearse to my Friends the same Things I told them the Day before, and that the Barking of a Dog interrupted my Recital; the next Day, when Sleep has left me, I shall be in Doubt whether the Barking of that Dog interrupted the Recital I made being awake, or asleep. As we often happen to doubt, whether certain Things did really befall us, or we did but dream so. But if on the other hand, our Dreams have no Relation with what we have done when awake, why should we believe the Things we thought in sleep, are false, rather than those we thought, when awake? For since they equally disagree, and this Discord is the Mark of Falsity, the one ought not to be more suspected of Falsity than the other.

It is agreed that the Views of our Understanding are formed by the Impulse of the Brain, and the Motion of Fibres and Spirits. From hence it follows that the *Evidence* of the *Images* which are presented to my Mind, (being Nothing but a certain Manner, or *Modification* of those Images) comes from the same Cause, as the *Images* them-

themselves. If we grant this Point, which cannot be contested, it must be likewise allowed that the Brain may be moved, and the Spirits and the Fibres agitated alike, as well by internal Causes, as by outward *Objects*. From whence we must conclude, that *Evidence* may be found in Things false, as well as true; and that the *Evidence* of what is true bears no Marks, whereby we can distinguish it from the *Evidence* of what is false. And these Marks can be had no where else, if it be as the Defenders of *Evidence* maintain, that what is evident is self-evident, and has no Need of Proofs from without.

For otherwise to know *Evidence*, we must have Need of another *Evidence*, as we have of external Light, to see Light. Suppose a Man carries several *Pieces* of Mony in a Bag, and all *Brass*, except one of Silver; and the Poor apprized of it, should beg the *Pieces* of Money, every one of them hoping that the *Piece* of Silver might fall to his Lot; let the Owner of this Bag and these *Pieces* thereupon make a Distribution in the Dark, can either of these Petitioners know whether he has received the *Piece* of Silver, or whether it was drawn out of the Bag
or

or not? and if any one of them conjecturing by the Sound of his *Piece*, or Observations he might make by handling it, or by other frivolous Tokens, should believe he knew certainly, and declare openly that he had the Silver *Piece*, he would be ridiculous. The other Indigents will be so no less, if each of them has the same Opinion of his own *Piece*, and believes that all the rest are deceived; and this Controversy cannot be decided but in the Light.

Such is the Error of the *Dogmatists*. In the thick Darkness of Ignorance, each of them handles his *Piece* of *Brass*, and not one of them but boasts he has by infallible Signs discovered, that his *Piece* is the only and precious *Piece*, i. e. *Truth*, which he has received of God, the Dispenser of all Good, and attributes to himself a distinct and evident Perception, more clear than the Light of the Sun at Noon Day; is persuaded that all others in Error, who have the same Opinion of their *Pieces* of Money; and will never acknowledge that his so much boasted *Evidence* is Nothing but Darkness, 'till Light shall be imparted to him from some other Quarter.

CHAP.



C H A P. X.

The NINTH PROOF.

1. *Reason to doubt of all Things, proposed by DES-CARTES; namely, that we are ignorant whether God has not made us of such a Nature, as to be always deceived.* 2. *From whence it follows that our intimate Perception of Things is dubious.*

Reason to doubt of all Things proposed by Des-Cartes; namely, that we are ignorant whether God has not made us of such a Nature, as to be always deceived.

1. **D**ES-CARTES supplies us with another Reason to doubt, when he says in the Beginning of his *Meditations and Principles*, (a) *that we cannot tell whether God has not made us of such a Nature, as to be always deceived in Things which appear to us to be most clear.* This Doubt was worthy of a *Philosopher*, if he who proposed it, had taken Care to explain it. When I say a *Philosopher*, I don't mean a *Christian Philosopher*, who knows that (b) *God lighteth every Man that*

(a) *Cartes. Medit. 1, & 6. Princip. Part. 1. 75, & 13.*

(b) *Joh. xix.*

cometh into the World. But *Des-Cartes* spoke then as a *Philosopher*, and not as a *Christian*. And he who could suppose there is no *God*, (c) might as well suppose *God* created Men so as to be always deceived. But when he sets up for a new Inventer of Truth, having begun the *System* of his *Philosophy* by *Doubt*, and proposed Reasons for that *Doubt*, immediately after, as if the Way to *Truth* had been opened to him from Heaven, he so absolutely ceases to doubt, that he does not so much as give himself the Trouble, to solve those Arguments which had obliged him to doubt.

But this Matter is not to be handled here, it is enough to say at present, that this *Doubting* is of such Importance, to hinder us from receiving any *Proposition* as certain, while we make Use of Nothing but our Reason, that *Des-Cartes* has been so far from destroying it, that it cannot be destroyed, if Reason does not borrow Assistance from *Faith*. For let any one be convinced that Man is an *Animal* so formed by Nature, that what appears to him to be true, is false; all you shall propose against this Opi-

(c) *Cartes. Princip. Part. 1. 7.*

nion, will appear to him to be false or true; if false, he will justly reject it; if true, believing himself to be so made, he will still be obliged to reject it as false. Thus it will be easie for him to subvert all Reasons that can be objected against his Opinion: and we cannot invent one, which will not fall under this general Law, that what appears to a Man to be of most Truth, is most false.

From
whence it
follows, that
the intimate
Perception
of Things is
dubious.

2. As to the rest, all I have alledged already, and principally that Reason of doubting all Things proposed by *Des-Cartes*, utterly overthrows the strong Hold in which the *Dogmatists* confide, when they affirm we have a certain intimate Knowledge of many Things; which though not founded on Reason, is nevertheless certain and evident; that such is the Knowledge of first *Principles*; the Knowledge I have that I am at this present awake; they say though these Things cannot be proved by Reasoning, we conceive notwithstanding by some intimate Perception, that they are certain. For if Nature has formed me in such Manner, that what appears to me to be most true, shall be most false, when I believe I know, and feel by an intimate Perception, that the *whole* is greater than a *Part*, or that

I am awake: I must believe that this is false, if I will adhere to that Reason of doubting proposed by *Des-Cartes*.



C H A P. XI.

The Tenth Proof.

'Tis begging the Question, to attempt to prove by Reason, that Reason is certain.

WE have yet another Proof as valid as the former, to make the Weakness of Reason appear. What Argument soever we form to defend Reason, is a Production of Reason. But it can produce Nothing which will be absolutely certain. Whatever Proof then I can invent to defend the Certainty of Reason, will be uncertain. It is therefore begging the *Question*, to defend Reason by Reason: for the Arguments proposed for that End, as certain and true, are derived from Reason; which is the very Thing in *Question*; namely, whether it can produce Certainty and Truth.

F

C H A P.



C H A P. XII.

The E L E V E N T H P R O O F.

Reasoning uncertain.

I Must now harden my Forehead, and since I have begun to doubt, must doubt in good Earnest when the *Dogmatists* are to be reduced to despair. Whatever Proof they bring against me, they do it by Reasoning. I shall not here call in the Authority of many *Philosophers*, to whom all the Art of Reasoning has appeared dubious, uncertain, and fallacious: who have maintained that the Rules of *Logick*, are Snares and Fetters we cannot get clear off, which make what is constantly false seem true, and conclude from thence that we must be mad to give Faith to that which so frequently deceives us.

To be more intelligible. Let any one propose to me an Argument which our Adversaries hold for most certain and unquestionable, I am ready to shew
it

it to be most uncertain, and of no Effect at all. They would prove for Instance that *Peter* is a rational Animal: See how they reason. Every Man is a rational Animal; *Peter* is a Man, therefore *Peter* is a rational Animal. The first of these *Propositions* being universal, does principally pass for true, because every Man in particular is a rational Animal. For having observed that this Man is a rational Animal, and that, and the next, and we have never seen any Man who was not a rational Animal: out of the Mass of these particular *Propositions*, which declare every Man to be a rational Animal, this universal *Proposition* was formed; viz. every Man is a rational Animal: from whence it follows that the Certainty of this universal *Proposition*, depends on the Certainty of all those particular *Propositions*.

But in the Reasoning we now call to Account, the Certainty of the particular *Proposition* depends on the Certainty of the universal; for from every Man being a rational Animal, it is concluded that *Peter* is so; thus we fall into that vicious Reasoning called a Circle. Besides, since *Des-Cartes* believed and maintained, that *God* can change the

Essence of Things, and make them not to be what they are, *viz.* that the Number twenty shall be not composed of two tens, that a Man may not be a rational Animal, (I don't now examine the Truth of these Propositions) it is possible a Man may be found who is not a rational Animal; and therefore that first universal *Proposition*, every Man is a rational Animal, will not be true.

This Example may suffice to make us doubt the Certainty of all other Reasonings: and to this the Proofs given of it by consummate *Philosophers* engage us. I touch these Matters but superficially here. To be wise, I ought not to give Credit lightly to Reasonings, whose Falsity I have so often experienced. Being in this Disposition, if I am to be attacked by a Company of *Dogmatists*, what Arms will they take to oppose me with, while under the Safe-guard of my Doubts and Diffidences? The best they can use, will be those Reasonings called *Demonstrations*. For whatever Proof they produce, will be invalid, if not reduced into Form of Argument. Now there is no Argument which falls not under this Obligation of Doubting.



C H A P. XIII.

The TWELFTH PROOF.

From the Dissentions of the Dogmatists, it follows that we must not adhere to any of their Sects.

THE Dissentions of the *Dogmatists*, will furnish us moreover with a very good Proof to refute them. And it's this very Proof the Physicians, fir-named *Empiricks*, raise against the Physicians who make Use of Reasoning, and are therefore call'd *Rationalists*, or Reasoners. If Nothing has ever been affirmed by one *Dogmatist*, which has not been denied by another; if they never advanced any Opinion which has not been contested, what Confidence can we place in their Affirmations, seeing other *Dogmatical Philosophers* of equal Pride do not submit to them?

Let us run through their several Sects; each of them will boldly lay Claim to Truth, have its own Approbation only, and be rejected by the Suf-

frages of all the rest. Will it then become a wise Man, to follow one Party, which is not approved but by that alone, and is condemned by many?



C H A P. XIV.

The THIRTEENTH PROOF.

The Law of doubting established by excellent Philosophers. 1. by Anacharfis. 2. Pherecydes. 3. Pythagoras. 4. Empedocles. 5. Gorgias Leontin. 6. Xenophanes. 7. Epicharmus. 8. Parmenides. 9. Xenocrates. 10. Zeno of Elea. 11. Heraclitus. 12. Anaxagoras. 13. Democritus. 14. Protagoras. 15. Socrates. 16. Plato, *Author of the first Academy.* 17. Aristotle. 18. Arcesilas, *Author of the second Academy.* 19. Lacydes. 20. Carneades, *Author of the third Academy.* 21. Clitomachus. 22. Philo, *Author of the fourth Academy.* 23. Antiochus, *Author of the fifth Academy.* 24. Cicero. 25. Varro, Piso, Lucullus, and Brutus. 26. *Origin of Pyrrhonism.* 27. Metrodorus. 28. Anaxarchus. 29. Pyrrho. 30. *How many Academies there have been*

and

and the Difference between the Academy and Pyrrhonism. 31. There have been but two Academies, the old and the new; and the new was a real Pyrrhonism. 32. The Differences of the new Academy, and the Sect of the Scepticks proposed, and reconciled. First Difference. 33. Second Difference. 34. Third Difference. 35. Fourth Difference. 36. Fifth Difference. 37. Sixth Difference. 38. Seventh Difference. 39. Why Philosophers who make Profession of doubting, had rather pass for Academicks than Pyrrhonians. 40. It's false to say that the Sect of the Scepticks, or Pyrrhonians, was interrupted after Timon. 41. Timon of Phlius. 42. Nausiphanes of Teos. 43. Theodotus of Bithynia. 44. Aenesidemus of Cnossus. 45. Ptolemæus of Alexandria. 46. Cornelius Celsus. 47. Phavorinus. 48. Sextus Empiricus. 49. viz. If Sextus Empiricus was the same as Sextus Chæroneus. 50. Great Affinity between the Sceptick, Empirick, and Methodick Sect. 51. Lucian. 52. Uranius. 53. And a great many more of the Dogmatists, Porphyrius. 54. Aristippus, Aristo of Chio. 55. Herillus of Carthage. 56. Menedemus of Eretria.

Of the W E A K N E S S of

57. *The Eretrick and Megarick Philosophers.* 58. *Monimus the Cynick.* 59. *Among the remote Nations, the Magi.* 60. *The Brachmans.* 61. *Certain Turk Philosophers call'd the Astonish'd.* 62. *Among the Jews the Effens.* 63. *And the Seboreans.* 64. *R. Moses the Son of Maimonides.* 65. *And among the Arabians the Discourfers.*

*The Law
of doubting
established
by excellent
Philosophers.*

LEarned and intelligent Persons acknowledging with what Darkness human Understanding, with what profound Night the Things which surround Man are covered, and observing at the same time, that the principal Causes of the Errors to which we are subject, are to be ascribed to the Temerity and Precipitation of walking in rugged and intricate Ways, in the midst of this Darkness, with as much Assurance as if we marched on even Ground by the Light of the Sun at Noon-Day, have thought it requisite to moderate themselves, and check this inconsiderate Impetuosity.

After they had master'd their Minds, and brought them to reflect, they shook off their Prejudices : carefully examined the Nature of their Bodies, of their Un-

Understanding, and Things without them, observing all, trying all; and at last discovered, the only Way to avoid Error, was to suspend Belief. It is certain this was the *Origin* of *Philosophy*, this Method of doubting; which wise Men took, by the Knowledge they had of the Weakness of their Understanding. There was then no other Difference between an intelligent Person, and one of the gross Vulgar, a Philosopher and an Ignorant, but this: the one knew that he knew Nothing, and the other did not know that.

If we run through the History of *Philosophy* from its first Rise to this Time, in so great a Diversity of Opinions, we shall find that all those excellent Persons the Authors of it, if you except a very small number, were agreed in this Point, that *Truth* is hidden, the Senses and Understanding deceitful, weak, and under a profound Ignorance of all Things.

I shall not place *Homer* in the Front of them, nor deck my self with his Authority, as the *Scepticks* very readily do, either by following the Custom of Antiquity, which in all Questions constantly appealed to the Suffrage of *Homer*, or because they knew that *Arcefilas* and *Pyrrho* had *Homer* always in their Hands,
and

and made it their ordinary Reading. Neither will I alledge the seven wise Men of *Greece*, whose Maxims they say establish'd this Law of doubting. These precarious Authorities, have more Ostentation than Truth.

Anacharsis. 1. *Anacharsis* maintained, (as has been reported) that there never was a Rule of Truth, or a CRITERIUM, and that Man can comprehend Nothing, and reproved the *Greeks* who were of a contrary Opinion.

Pherecydes 2. As to *Pherecydes*, we must all agree that he was of this Sentiment, since he has writ there is no *Truth* at all, and that he knew no such thing.

Pythagoras. 3. Such also was the Doctrine of *Pythagoras*, and in the Works attributed to him, we find this celebrated Maxim: 'No one ought to desire any thing, because he knows not what will be best for him.' Being very well apprized, that Man with all the Application he is capable of, can never arrive to Wisdom which depends on the Knowledge of *Truth*, he declared to *Leo Prince* of the *Phliasians*, he possessed neither Science nor Wisdom, that God alone enjoys that Happiness, and boasted of Nothing but being a Lover of Wisdom, that is to say, *Philosophy*.

4. *Em-*

4. *Empedocles*, a Disciple of *Pythagoras*, improved by this Instruction; and frequently complained, that the Way of Sense was too narrow to conduct us to *Truth*. Empedocles.

5. *Gorgias Leontin*, Prince of those formerly called *Sophists*, educated in the School of *Empedocles*, composed a Book divided into three Parts. In the first he shewed, that we cannot say any Thing exists. In the second proved, that supposing it true that some Thing does exist, Man cannot comprehend it; having neither for that purpose, any Rule of *Truth*, Understanding, nor Senses. And in the third made appear, that although Man may comprehend something, he cannot explain to another what he comprehends. Gorgias Leontin.

6. *Xenophanes*, who is placed in the Number of the *Pythagoreans*, acknowledged likewise that we can comprehend Nothing with Certainty; that there is no Rule of Truth, no Reason, nor Sense; that all depends on Opinion. And asserted this Doctrine with so high a hand, that he was thought to be the first Inventer of it, although not so. Xenophanes.

7. *Epicharmus* in the same List, would have us suspend our Judgment and Epicharmus.

and Belief, and pretended that Wisdom wholly consists therein.

Parmenides 8. *Parmenides*, to whom *Plato* gave the Surname of *Great*, called those rash and arrogant, who believed they had acquired *Science*, saying it is above human Capacity.

Xeniades. 9. *Xeniades* the *Corinthian*, asserted there is no CRITERIUM, or Rule of Truth; that our *Ideas*, Opinions, and all Things are false. *Democritus* makes Mention of this *Xeniades*; and for that Reason I can hardly believe, though I dare not deny it, that this was the same *Xeniades*, a *Corinthian* likewise, who had *Diogenes* for his Slave, and survived him. *Democritus* was elder than *Diogenes*, who died at the Age of fourscore and ten.

Zeno of Elea. 10. *Zeno* the *Eleatick*, is celebrated among those who have taught that we must suspend our Belief. He was Author of the *Eleatick* Sect, which *Plato* (a) nevertheless attributes to *Xenophanes*, and yet will have it to be more ancient than *Xenophanes*.

Heraclitus. 11. *Heraclitus* advanced the same Doctrine.

(a) *Plato*. Sophist.

12. As did likewise *Anaxagoras*, who Anaxagoras. proved that all Things are furrounded with Darknefs.

13. *Democritus* taught that the Causes Democritus. of Things are unknown; that there is Nothing true; or if there be any thing so, we know it not: that he did not know whether he knew any Thing, or Nothing; whether there be any Thing or Nothing: rejected all Kind of Demonstrations; and this Maxim is related as his, *viz.* that Truth lies hid in the Bottom of a Well.

14. *Protagoras*, one of the Disciples Protagoras. of *Democritus*, firnam'd Wisdom, said there is no Rule of *Truth*, Nothing true nor false, and a great Difference between one Man and another: that what appears to this, does not appear so to that; that there is not any Thing more of one sort than another; having declared there is Nothing upon which we cannot speak *pro* and *con*, and being even uncertain too, whether we can dispute for and against one and the same Thing, he was the first who establish'd the Method of defending two contrary Opinions on the same Subject.

15. *Socrates*, that illustrious Author Socrates. of the Art of doubting, took the same Way

Way afterwards, and made it very common. For having observed that Men know Nothing, and do not so much as know that; openly declared, and made Profession of knowing Nothing; and believed he merited thereby the *Eulogy* given him by *Apollo*, viz. that he was of all Men the most wise; it being the Perfection of Wisdom to acknowledge our Ignorance.

We see by the Dialogues of *Plato*; that he assured Nothing upon any Matter proposed to him, being satisfied with refuting those who had the Temerity to be positive. This made his Adversaries treat him as an Ignorant, and a Fool, seeing he was content to interrogate others, without being inclinable to answer to any *Questions*, and own'd his Ignorance and Incapacity. He addicted himself therefore wholly to the Study of Morality, abandoning natural Philosophy, which had been cultivated by him at first very diligently, and which he acknowledged afterwards to exceed the Reach of Man's Understanding. As to his own particular, he perceived himself to be so incapable of knowing Things, that although at first he thought he was very sagacious, and others judged

judged so too, yet at last he was so convinced of the contrary, as to find himself obliged to lay aside all he had learned. And made Profession of such profound Ignorance, that he says he knew not even whether he was a Man, or Something else, nor in short what he was.

Some have pretended, when he used that Language, he did not speak sincerely, nor seriously, but by Irony or Modesty, and to discountenance the *Sophists*, who foolishly boasted they were ignorant of Nothing, and ever prepared to discourse upon all Points and Matters. If it had been so, he would not have preserved so constantly in the publick Acknowledgment of his Ignorance; especially when he talked with his Friends, and with grave and serious Persons, and had no Occasion to decry the *Sophists*: Nor have examin'd all Things, as he was accustomed to do, conformably to that Doctrine, and made so false an Interpretation, and so contrary to his own Sentiments, of the *Oracle* which gave Testimony to his Wisdom. Many Sects of *Philosophers* were derived from him, of which the most celebrated, nam'd the *Academy*, followed this Method of doubting all Things,
and

and even augmented and carried it to its highest Perfection.

Plato Author of the first Academy.

16. *Plato*, Father and Institutor of the *Academy*, instructed by *Socrates* in the Art of doubting, and declaring himself his Follower, conformed to his Way of handling Matters, and undertook to oppose all his Predecessors. It is not only in the Books call'd his *Gymnasticks*, but even when he appears to be more affirmative, whether he makes *Socrates* speak or another, and advances Nothing as true, but only as likely to be so, he still sticks to his Maxim, that we must leave the Knowledge of *Truth* to the *Gods* and their Offspring, and be content with the Search of what is probable.

The *Academicks* who succeeded *Plato*, endeavour'd to fix this *Philosophy*, which 'till that Time had been libertine and vagrant, and found it self already burthened with the pretended Knowledge of many Things. They formed *Systems*, Plans, Rules of Doctrine; and neglecting the Precept of *Socrates* their first Master, who approved not this Way, established Laws for teaching and learning; and had even the Assurance to advance *Dogma's*.

17. *Aristotle* nevertheless retained Aristotle. these uncertain and doubtful Ways of disputing all Things; and was followed therein by the *Peripateticks* his Profelytes. We find many Passages in his Works, and chiefly in his Books of *Metaphysicks*; which although they do not deny that there is a Way to *Truth*, will not allow us nevertheless to search for it, but in Beginning by *Doubt*, and after they have first shewed the Difficulty of the Thing. It likewise escaped him to say, that there is no Difference between firm Opinion and *Science*. From whence it follows, that all the Opinions of Men being uncertain, all their *Sciences* are so too.

18. *Arcefilas* enters the Lists at length, whom an ancient (b) Author Arcefilas, Author of the second Academy. elegantly calls the illustrious Prince of the *Academy*, who affirms Nothing. He revived that Law of doubting all Things proposed by *Socrates*, and almost lost in his Time: restored the ancient Custom of contradicting every Thing offered in a Dispute, of supporting what was most probable, and of never proceeding beyond the best Appearance of Likelihood. Nay pushed

(b) *Pompon. Mel. Lib. I. CAP. 18.*

Matters farther; for having remarked that against this Maxim of *Socrates*; viz. *I know no more than that I know Nothing*, one may make this important Objection: that Man may then know somewhat, if he knows but this only, viz. that he knows Nothing; he would not even receive that Maxim which *Socrates* left, to be as it were some Consolation to human Weakness; and pronounced that we do not so much as know, whether we know Nothing; that as Nothing is certain, so Nature has not given us any *Rule of Truth*; (human Understanding and Senses being utterly incapable of comprehending it;) that in all Questions there are opposite Reasons to be found of equal Validity, one Thing being neither more true nor probable than another; that all is involved in Darkness; and therefore we are not to admit nor affirm any Thing, but always suspend our Assent. Accordingly he never declared his Opinion, not so much as allowing we should have Opinions. And if any one proposed and maintained one of his own, opposed it with great Decency and Politeness, and no less Wit and Subtilty.

But after all, this very Man, who when he acted the *Philosopher* would
not

not consent that one Thing was more true or probable than another, in the common Usage of Life followed what appeared to him to have most Probability. Mean Time in practising and maintaining this Method of *Philosophy*, his great Modesty would not permit him to say that he was the Author or Inventor of it, but ascribed it to *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Parmenides*, and *Heraclitus*. *Arcefilas* was notwithstanding drawn to this Party by *Pyrrho*, to whom he adhered having abandoned *Theophrastus*, *Crantor*, *Diodorus* and *Menedemus*.

He was then a true *Pyrrhonian*, and the *Pyrrhonians* placed him in the Number of the *Scepticks*, and of their own Sect; although he did not reject the Title of an *Academick*: and must then be esteemed not only the Restorer, but moreover as the Reformer of the Doctrine of *Socrates*, and the ancient *Academy*. It was he who gave Birth to the new *Academy*, which is built on more solid Foundations than the old: had many Disciples, but his Doctrine notwithstanding was not at first very well relished, because he seemed to be for extinguishing all the Light of *Science*, for throwing Darkneſs into the

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Mind,

Mind, and subverting all Foundations of *Philosophy*.

Lacydes.

19. *Lacydes* was the only Person who defended the Doctrine of *Arcefilas*, and transmitted it to *Evander* his Disciple with many others. *Evander* to *Hegesimus*, and *Hegesimus* to *Carneades*.

Carneades,
Author of
the third
Academy.

20. *Carneades* nevertheless did not follow the Doctrine of *Arcefilas* in all Things, but retained the greater Part, and the Main of it. From hence he was stiled the Author of the new *Academy*, called the third. Without ever discovering his own Sentiments, he opposed with great Wit and Eloquence, all Opinions that came before him. For to the Study of *Philosophy*, he brought an admirable Share of good Parts, a trusty Memory, great Facility of Speaking, and a long Use of *Logick*. A great Concourse went to hear him, and when the *Athenians* deputed him to go to the *Roman* Senate on Affairs of Importance, and assigned him *Critolaus* the *Peripatetick*, and *Diogenes* the *Stoick* for his Associates, *Philosophers* of great Renown, he was very favourably received there.

It was then they began at *Rome* to know the Charms of *Eloquence*, and the

the Worth of *Philosophy*. The flourishing Youth of that Common-wealth, who thought of obtaining the Empire of the World, allured by the Novelty and Excellence of that noble *Science*, which *Carneades* professed, followed him with so much Eagerness, that *Cato*, a Man otherwise of excellent Judgment, but rough, a little savage, and wanting in those Decencies which polite Learning inspires; as the *Romans* generally were in his Age, suspecting this new Kind of Erudition, that persuaded and carried all before it, advised the Senate to grant these *Deputies* what they asked, and dismiss them speedily with Honour.

It is true *Carneades* overthrew whatever he undertook to oppose, and remained invincible in the Opinions he maintained. In so much that the *Stoicks*, a contentious Race and subtil in Dispute, with whom both he and *Arcefilas* had frequently Contests, could hardly defend themselves against him: espoused, as I have said, the Doctrine of *Arcefilas*, if we except some Points, on which they did not agree, as concerning a *Rule of Truth*, Incomprehensibility, Things which are uncertain, and Suspension of Belief.

Brought many new Confirmations on this Matter, but all reducible notwithstanding to maintain there is no sure *Rule of Science*; that we can comprehend Nothing, but in all Things ought to follow Probability; that all Laws and Customs were established by the Opinions of Men, and by Nature; that we live in so great Ignorance of *Truth*, and Obscurity in all Things, as will not admit even of those *Principles*, of which the Light of Nature seems to make us see the Reality. As for Example; that two Things are equal between themselves, when equal to a third. The *Stoicks* to whom he was an Adversary, said to lessen his Reputation that he objected Nothing against them, of which he himself was the Inventor, but took his Objections out of the Books of *Chrysippus* the *Stoick*: being modest enough to agree to it, he said that without the Help of *Chrysippus* he could have done Nothing; and that he beat *Chrysippus* with his own Weapons.

'Tis true that *Chrysippus* willing to demolish this Law of doubting, and Suspension of the *Academicks*, produced all Arguments, not only those they were accustomed to defend themselves by, but moreover all they could possibly

bly make Use of. But when he came to destroy these Arguments, and had forgot Nothing which might conduce to it, it might easily appear, how much superior the Cause of the *Academicks* was to that of the *Stoicks*, since the declared Enemy of the *Academicks* being armed with their Reasons, appeared much stronger, than when he first undertook to refute them. Thus *Chrysippus* suffer'd by his own Strength, and out of his Arsenal *Carneades* was furnished with Artillery to overcome him.

21. *Carneades* enjoyed his Glory a long Time, and had excellent Men for his Disciples: Among others *Clitomachus*, a *Carthaginian*, who already instructed in the *Philosophy* of his own Country, and afterwards in the *Greek Philosophy* by *Carneades*, assisted him in the Establishment of the third *Academy*, and at length succeeded him. He was of great Capacity, studious and diligent, and having continued a considerable Time with *Carneades*, who had never writ any Thing, he took Care to collect all his Discourses, Acts, and Thoughts. But could never dive into the Opinion of *Carneades* in certain Points notwithstanding.

Clitomachus.

Such was the Effect of long Custom *Carneades* had persisted in, never to as-

sure any Thing, even to his most intimate Familiars. As to the rest, there was no Diversity of Opinion between them; for *Clitomachus* concurred with him, that we should suspend our Belief, because we can comprehend Nothing, and in the Conduct of Life, have Regard only to Probabilities, provided we do not give our Belief and Assent to them: There being many Things probable which are fallacious no less, and have not any Signature of Truth that may not be met with in those which are absolutely false: He advanced not this Doctrine as peculiar to himself, but as held by the *Academy*. He writ four Books of the Necessity of suspending Belief. I wish they had come to our Hands.

Philo, Author of the fourth Academy.

22. *Philo* was a Disciple of *Clitomachus*, who for dropping certain Points of the Opinions of *Carneades*, and *Clitomachus*, deserves to be called with *Charmides* the Founder of the fourth *Academy*. For he said Things are comprehensible in themselves; but nevertheless that we cannot comprehend them, by any Faculty which Nature has given us, to see perfectly into the *Objects*, whose *Ideas* offer themselves to our Minds: And accordingly can comprehend Nothing.

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23. *Antiochus* was the Founder of the fifth *Academy*. A Disciple of *Philo* for many Years, and upheld the Doctrine of *Carneades*, being subtil and polite; but at last left the Party of those his Masters in the Declension of his Days, whether engaged to it by the Perswasions of *Mnesarchus* the *Stoick*, whose Lectures he had also heard; or could not resist the continual Persecutions of the *Dogmatists*; or lastly whether stimulated by some secret Vanity, he affected to be Author of a Sect, and to have Disciples call'd after his Name *Antiochians*: Boasted notwithstanding of his being returned to the ancient *Academy*, although in Effect he was gone over to the Sect of the *Stoicks*. But tried to wash out the Stain of Levity, being so fully satisfy'd that the Name of the *Academy* would be to his Honour, that he was for perswading others he came out from thence.

Antiochus,
Author of
the fifth
Academy.

He then made the Tenets of the *Stoicks*, which he attributed to *Plato*, pass in the *Academy*, asserting that the *Doctrine* of the *Stoicks* was not new, but a Reformation of the old *Academy*. Published also a Work against *Philo* his Master, or rather against himself. For that very Doctrine which was opposed by him in his advanced Age, he had long taught, and learnedly defended. Confirmed

firmed likewise thereby the Doctrine of the new *Academy*, which he undertook to confute; shewing by his Inconstancy, what little Dependance there is on the Judgments of Men for the Knowledge of *Truth*, and how far they are from being ascertained, whether they can know any Thing or no. This fifth *Academy* was Nothing then but a Conjunction of the old *Academy*, and the *Philosophy* of the *Stoicks*, or rather the real *Philosophy* of the *Stoicks*, bearing the Appendages and Titles of the ancient *Academy*; I mean that which flourished betwixt *Plato* and *Arcefilas*. For the *Stoicks* had with *Antiochus* abandoned the Law of doubting, whose Doctrines are preserved, and whom we see to have been neither a true *Platonick*, nor Follower of *Socrates*.

Cicero.

24. This *Philo* I have spoke of, necessitated to leave *Athens* in the War of *Mithridates*, retired to *Rome*, and had *Cicero* for a Disciple. He exactly taught him the whole System of the new *Academy*. After which *Cicero* coming to *Athens*, was instructed six Months by *Antiochus*, in the Precepts of the old *Academy*. Even when engaged in honourable Employments of the Republick, he did not in the least relinquish the Study of *Philosophy*, and his House was the Re-

Reception of the first Rate *Philosophers* of that Time.

He long adhered to the Doctrine of the old *Academy*, after it was made known to him by the Institution of *Antiochus*. But at length Reflections, Study, and Acquaintance with the World, having improved his Learning, he returned to the *Philosophy* of *Philo*; and was the Reverse of what happened to *Antiochus*, who left the new *Academy* to return to the old: For *Cicero* passed from the latter to the former, which he explained and supported by Writings we cannot sufficiently esteem. He used the Liberty allowed him by this Sect with so little Reserve, that he made no Scruple of changing his Opinion, as Occasion offered, saying he was at his Liberty, and followed what appeared to him most probable: He often, and that publicly, recommended the Manner of the *Academicks Philosophizing*, as modest, commodious, polite, and constant; fearing not to declare, that we can say Nothing so extravagant, which has not been asserted by some *Philosopher*.

25. *Varro* expressed himself with more Severity, saying that Nothing so strange can enter into a delirious Head, which some *Philosopher* has not ventured to advance.

Varro, *Piso*, *Lucullus*, and *Brutus*.

advance. This Man, the most Learned of the *Romans*, was imbued with the Precepts of *Antiochus*, and I make no Doubt but in the Satire intituled *Eumenides*, where he undertook to prove all Men mad, many Proofs were accumulated to shew, there is no Knowledge of *Truth* in human Minds.

Piso also received Lessons from *Antiochus*, as did many others, and principally *Lucullus*, so illustrious for the great Things he produced by the Elegancy of his Genius, and Proficiency in polite Learning. Being Questor, and after that General of the Army, he took Care to be always accompanied by *Antiochus*, who made him so zealous a Sticler for the ancient *Academy*; as *Aristus* Brother of *Antiochus*, engaged *Brutus* in the same Sect, a Man of the greatest Merit. These with all other Disciples of *Antiochus*, kept themselves within the Bounds of that old *Academy*. 'Twas then the Study of *Philosophy* flourished at *Rome*, while the *Academy* was almost deserted even in *Greece*; oppressed by the Arms of the *Romans*, and continually harrassed by the Troubles of War, they thought much more of their own Safety, than of the Search of *Truth*.

Human Understanding.

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26. Now this Art of doubting correctly, which not only makes Profession of Ignorance, but of being even ignorant of our Ignorance, had made a great Progress before *Arcefilas*.

*The Origin
of Pyrrho-
nism.*

27. For *Metrodorus* of *Chio*, who came out of the School of *Democritus*, or as some pretend from that of *Nassa*, and who was of the Isle of *Chio* too, instructed by *Protagoras*, Disciple of *Democritus*, in the Front of his Treatise of Nature, affixed this Maxim; none of us know any Thing, and we are not even sure, whether we know any Thing, or Nothing. This made it be said, that he had subverted all *Rule* of Truth, named
CRITERIUM.

*Metrodo-
rus.*

28. *Anaxarchus* did the same, an *Abderite*, Defender of the Doctrine of *Democritus*; surnamed *Eudæmonicus*, for the Steadiness of his Courage, and the easiness of his Manners. This procured him great Esteem from *Alexander* whom he attended. He disown'd, as I have said, all *Rule* of Truth, affirming we cannot comprehend Things by our Understanding, but as Idiots, or those who are asleep; that *Objects* in the Manner they represent themselves to our Minds, are like Pictures which shew a Resemblance, but not Things
them-

*Anaxar-
chus.*

themselves; in short that we know Nothing, and even know not that we know Nothing. Which he had from *Metrodorus*.

Pyrrho.

29. The Art of doubting was then almost in its Perfection, and human Understanding convinced of its Weakness, when *Pyrrho*, Native of the City of *Elis*, gave the finishing Stroke to that Art. For having read the Books of *Democritus* and *Metrodorus*, he afterwards followed *Anaxarchus* into the *Indies*, had Conferences with the *Magi*, and *Gymnosophists*; and on his Return to his own Country, proposed a more perfect Kind of Incomprehensibility, which the *Greeks* call *Acatalepsis*. For observing with great Penetration, that the Ancients after they had acknowledged their Ignorance in all Things, and their Ignorance even of that Ignorance, retained notwithstanding a Manner of *Philosophizing*, which seemed to allow some *Sciences* as certain, and used some Affirmations; this made him assume a new Form, that put him out of the Reach of all the Prevarications of the *Dogmatists*. 'Tis true he left Nothing in Writing; but had Disciples, who took Care to preserve his Doctrine in Books, of which

which some have been transmitted even to us, and are kept in their Integrity.

This will excuse us from being more particular. It is enough to say the *Pyrrhonians* admitted no *Rule*, no Reasoning, no Sign to discover *Truth*; affirmed, defined, determined Nothing; believed not that any Thing was rather this, than another; what ever Reasons were proposed to them, they found other of equal Validity to support the contrary; preferred no one Reason, maintained there is Nothing true, that all Things are done by Custom, and even when they advanced these Propositions, assured them not, but said they did it only by a Spirit of Controversy. For *Pyrrho* opposed all the Opinions of other Sects, proving we are to reject them, not exempting his own from this Law, which he believed to be no more certain, nor receivable, than any of the rest: And when he asserted we can comprehend Nothing, pretended not to comprehend even that, as being a Proposition equally incomprehensible.

Therefore as to this universal Proposition, that we can comprehend Nothing, he excepted not the Proposition itself; and compared it to a Medicine which out of our Bodies does not expel hurtful

ful and superfluous Humours only, but itself also with the rest. Despairing of knowing *Truth*, he stood to Appearances, and to supply the Place of a *Criterium*, or Rule of Truth in the Use of Life; would have us follow Laws, Customs, and natural Sentiments, but without forming Judgments or Opinions.

By this Method he accidentally obtained that Tranquility of Mind he sought for, and hoped to find in the Study of Nature. And because those Sensations we have from without, called *Evils*; as Cold, Hunger, Thirst, and the like, depend not on our Opinions, he only did what he could, forbearing to determine, whether they are *Evils*; which made him bear them with the greater Moderation. Whereby he merited the Praise of much Constancy in Danger. He was very far from being what some would represent him, as not avoiding it, not turning out of the Way when he met a Cart, or was on a Precipice, not shunning Dogs that would attack him, flying from the Company of Men, sauntering in Solitude, or remaining like a Statue, immoveable, in the same Posture.

All this was contrived to render him ridiculous, by People of little Sincerity,

ty, and not rightly informed of his Doctrine. He was on the contrary very much esteemed by his Fellow-Citizens, who offered him the supreme Pontificate of his Country, and conferred great Honours upon him, granting to all *Philosophers* an Exemption from publick Offices for his sake. The *Athenians* gave him the Freedom of their City. It is said likewise that he received a Present of six thousand Crowns of Gold from *Alexander*, when he first approached him, whether it was to salute, or to offer him a Poem, he made in his Honour.

Epicurus very much admired him, and often informed himself of his Manners and Conduct. But, you'll say, *Epicurus* represented him as an Ignorant. But which of the *Philosophers* has escaped his slanders? He does not respect even *Democritus*, the Fountain from whence he drew his Philosophy, nor *Nausiphanes* of *Teos*, who had been his Master, and a Disciple of *Pyrrho*. It did not become him to reproach *Pyrrho* with Ignorance, who was ignorant himself, having not the least Tincture of polite Learning. It was likewise his Custom to insult those who applied themselves to it, under Pretence that the

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Knowledge thereof contributed Nothing to Wisdom, but in the Bottom did it to hide his own Ignorance under this counterfeit Contempt.

But *Pyrrho* was accounted ignorant, not for being so in Reality, as *Cicero* (a) testifies, and must be allow'd, but because according to his System of *Philosophy*, he made Profession of knowing Nothing, and that he could know Nothing; notwithstanding which Men of great Learning came out of his School. Other Persons likewise treated him with great Indignity, not so much through Averfion for the Doctor, as the Doctrine.

But on the other Hand, he was in the highest Esteem with the People. His Disciples very numerous, extolled him, and especially *Timon* of *Phlius*, wonderfully applauded his Wit, Subtilty, and Penetration in Disputes, his Constancy in the Accidents of Life, and his Modesty. He called him a *Sun*, and believed no Man was to be compared to him. 'Tis he who according to *Pocock's* Conjecture is by the *Arabs* called *Phurun*, and in their Ignorance of *Greek* History, is believed by them to have been the Disciple of *Thales* and *Pythagoras*;

(a) Cicero libr. 3. de Finib.

as if the Doctrine of *Pyrrho* included all the *Philosophy* of the *Greeks*, divided into two Sects, the *Ionick* and *Ita-lick*.

The Followers of *Pyrrho*, were called after his Name *Pyrrhonians*, and also *Scepticks*, for considering and examining the Weight of Reasons, which presented themselves, *pro* and *con* upon all Questions. Were named *Zeteticks*, for that they applied themselves to the Search of *Truth*. And some stil'd them *Aporeticks*, because it was their Profession to doubt of all Things.

Arcesilas on their Precepts undertook to reform the ancien *Academy*, and erect the new. For it is said he imitated *Pyrrho*, and conversed with *Timon*. So that having enriched the *Epoche*, that is to say *Pyrrho's* Art of doubting, with the elegant Learning of *Plato*, and armed himself with the *Logick* of *Diodorus*, *Aristo* pleasantly applied to him that Verse of *Homer* on the *Chimæra*, which says that she was Lion before, Dragon behind, and *Chimæra*, i.e. Goat in the middle. According to him, *Arcesilas* was *Plato* before, *Pyrrho* behind, and *Diodorus* in the midst. Wherefore some ranked him in the Number of *Scepticks*, and *Sex-*

tus Empiricus avers, there is very little Difference between his Sect, which is *Sceptick*, and that of *Arcefilas*, the middle *Academy*.

How many Academies there have really been, and the Difference between the Academy, and Pyrrhonism.

30. Although it may be enough for my Design to have shewn already, (as I shall continue to do farther) that the most illustrious *Philosophers* of Antiquity have acknowledged the Weakness of human Understanding, I shall not think it Loss of Time, to make appear in what the new *Academy* was different from the old; and wherein one and the other differed from *Pyrrhonism*. Some have pretended there was but one *Academy* and no more. *Philo*, Author of the fourth *Academy*, wrote a Book to prove it. *Plutarch* another to the same Purpose.

This will be found true, if without hearkning to Contests, we have Regard only to the first *Principle* laid down by *Socrates*, that *Man knows nothing*. For as the several Branches, which grow out of the same Trunk, and extend themselves differently, are not different Trees; so all those Sects, sprung out of that one Trunk of the Doctrine of *Socrates*, although divided into divers Schools, seem to make but one *Academy*. Notwithstanding this, if we look more near-

ly into the Matter, there will appear such a Difference betwixt the old and the new, that we must of Necessity acknowledge there have been two *Academies*. For when *Socrates* said, that he knew but one Thing, namely that he knew Nothing, he acknowledged he knew some Thing, and therefore believed that Man might know some Thing with Certainty.

Arcefilas on the contrary denied that Certainty: And therein a capital and invincible Difference consists; the one believing with *Socrates*, that Man may know some Thing; the other maintaining with *Arcefilas*, that Man can know Nothing. As to the Corrective *Carneades* and *Philo* brought to the Doctrine of *Arcefilas*, 'tis very inconsiderable, and ought to be looked upon almost as insignificant. For it is easy to reconcile what *Arcefilas* said, that there is no *Truth* to be found in *Rerum Natura*, with what *Carneades* said, *viz.* that he did not deny but there is some *Truth* in Things, but that we have no *Rule* to discern it. For there are two Kinds of *Truth*, according to the School Distinction, one called *Truth of Existence*, the other *Truth of Judgment*. Now it is clear that these

Of the WEAKNESS of

two Propositions of *Arcefilas*, and *Carneades*, have Respect to *Truth* of Judgment: For how could those who maintain that we cannot know, nor affirm any Thing, know and affirm the *Truth* of *Existence*, that is to say that Things exist? But the *Truth* of *Judgment* is of the Number of relative Things, which ought not to be considered alone, and in themselves, but as having Reference to other, for that *Truth* refers to our Understanding. When *Arcefilas* then said, there is no *Truth*, his Meaning was that there is Nothing in Things, which the Understanding of Man can know with Certainty. And that is the same that *Carneades* held.

Besides *Arcefilas* alledged that Nothing can be comprehended, that all Things are obscure: (for the Word *obscure* better expresses the *Greek* Term *ἀόρατα*, which *Arcefilas* made Use of, than that of *uncertain*, employed by *Cicero*.) *Carneades* agreed that Nothing can be comprehended, but did not allow for the same Reason that all Things are obscure; because Probabilities to which he would have a wise Man adhere, he affirmed are not obscure in Effect. But notwithstanding this, *Arcefilas*

Arcefilas maintained that Things are obscure in such Sort, that they cannot be comprehended, but do not cease therefore, to be either probable or improbable. This was the very Sentiment of *Carneades*: for he denied not but Things are so obscure that they cannot be comprehended, he only denied their being so, as to hinder us from discerning those which deserve to be preferred or rejected, in the Use of Life.

It follows, that there was not any Disagreement betwixt them, *viz.* in that *Carneades* permitted the wise Man to have Opinions, and perhaps too sometimes to give his Assent; whereas *Arcefilas* denied both one and the other. Their Sentiments were the same. *Carneades* pretended only, that the wise Man ought to make Use of Things probable in the common Occurrences of Life, and without which we cannot live; but not in the Conduct of the Understanding, and the Search of *Truth*, from which only *Arcefilas* banished Opinion and Assent. All their Differences then consisted in Expressions, and not in Things.

Neither was there any greater Difference between the Doctrine of *Pyrrho* and the former. For when he said it

was the Weakness of our Capacity, and not the Nature of Things, which kept us from comprehending them; it was in that very Point likewise that *Arcefilas* and *Carneades* seemed not to accord; *Arcefilas* asserting there is no *Truth* in Things, *Carneades* owning there is indeed some *Truth* in them, but pretending we cannot comprehend it. Now this being different in Terms, is not therefore so in Effect. For to say there is no *Truth* in Things, and that the *Truth* of them in its own Nature cannot be comprehended, are relative Propositions, which refer to human Understanding, and their Signification is, that it is not the Nature of Things, but the Obscurity and Weakness of human Understanding which hinders it from being able to comprehend them.

Philo also agreed with *Carneades*, that the wise Man may have some Opinions. But when he said that the wise Man may also comprehend somewhat, but not so as to have no Reason for Doubt in it; here seems to be a little Fallacy in the Word *to comprehend*. For if in that Comprehension, he finds any Reason to doubt, it is not Comprehension, but Opinion. So he re-
lapsed

apsed into the Sentiment of *Carneades*, and agreed that Probability is to be followed in the Emergencies of Life, and the Conduct of Manners. But as to the fifth *Academy*, that of *Antiochus*, it was purely *Dogmatical*: Nothing but the old *Academy* covered with the Rags of the *Stoicks*, and therefore to have no Place in this Dissertation.

31. It must be granted then, that there have been properly but two *Academies*, the old, that of *Socrates*, and *Antiochus*; and the new, that of *Arcefilas*, *Carneades* and *Philo*: and this new *Academy* was no other but the Philosophy of *Pyrrho*. For if some Heads may be proposed in which they seem to differ, that is not so considerable, as to make two Sects of them, since the new and the old *Academy*, differing in Points much more essential, have nevertheless retained the Name of *Academy*. As we see likewise that the Doctrine of *Aristotle*, which was so dispersed, that it formed an Infinity of Sects, so different in their Doctrines, as to treat each other as mad, yet all retained the Name of *Peripateticks*, and *Aristotelians*.

There have been but two Academies, the old, and the new, and the latter was true Pyrrhonism.

'Tis

'Tis an old Question, as we learn from *Aulus Gellius* (a), and very much controverted by many *Greek* Authors, viz. to know in what the *Academicks* and *Pyrrhonians* differ. *Plutarch* composed a Book on this Matter. But since Time has deprived us of those Lights of Antiquity, let us follow *Sextus Empiricus* in his Account of all the Points in which this Difference lies, so exact that Nothing can be added to it.

The Difference between the new Academy, and the Sect of the Scepticks, proposed, and reconciled. The first Difference.

32. He places the first Article of the Disagreement of the new *Academy*, and the *Sceptical* Doctrine in this, that both one and the other asserting human Understanding can comprehend Nothing, the *Academicks* said it in the Affirmative, and the *Scepticks* doubtfully. But this Difference is of no Weight, and *Sextus* proposed it with Uncertainty. Indeed he who believes we know Nothing, and that we are ignorant even of this, how can he affirm any Thing? For whoever affirms a Thing, intimates that he knows what he affirms?

Second Difference.

33. The second Point of Difference proposed by *Sextus*, seems to be more important, although light in it self; it consists only in the Use of a Term. They agreed both one and the other,

(a) *A. Gell.* lib. ii. CAP. 5.

there are Things good and bad. But the *Academicks* speaking thus, declare at the same Time, they are perswaded it is more probable that what is found to be good is so, than that it is not. And when the *Scepticks* say some Things are good, they do not mean they are perswaded what they say is more probable than its contrary; only declare they follow the common Usages of Life, but without Perswasion and Opinion.

All the Difference then consists in this Opinion, which the *Academicks* confess, and the *Scepticks* disown. But when the *Scepticks* in the Usage of Life chuse a Thing as good, and prefer it to another, they are led thereto by an Appearance of Good which is found in that, and not in the other. They have then in their Mind, a strong and sensible *Idea* imprinted by that *Image*, and Appearance of Good, or its contrary, found in these Things: and it is by this *Idea* they are conducted to the Choice of that from whence the *Idea* was derived. The *Academicks* are likewise led by a like *Idea*, to that which appears good to them.

All the Difference consists in this; that one and the other being influenced by

by the *Idea* imprinted in their Minds by an Appearance of Good, the *Academicks* follow, and the *Scepticks* are led to it; and likewise in this; that the *Academicks* call it Opinion or Perswasion, and the *Scepticks* not: although neither affirm that the Thing from whence this *Image* or Appearance of Good issues, is good; but both own that the Thing chosen, *seems* to them to be good, and that this *Idea* is imprinted in their Minds, by which they suffer themselves to be drawn. The *Scepticks* also deny not but they have some Perswasion, nevertheless put a Difference betwixt their Kind of Perswasion, and that of the *Academicks*, as I shall shew.

Third Dif-
ference.

34. Their third Discord is reducible to the same Thing. The *Academicks* maintain there is Likelihood in many of their *Ideas*, that other of them have none; and amongst those that have it, there is in some more, in some less. The *Scepticks* pretend they are equal, in Respect to the Credit we give them. But *Sextus* who proposes this Difference, finds an Expedient to remove it. For he says the *Scepticks* will have the Verdict of *Ideas* to be equal as to Reason, *i. e.* so far as it respects the Knowledge

ledge of *Truth*, and the Acquisition of *Science* by Reason. For the most clear *Idea* is of no more Validity to make me discern *Truth*, than the most obscure: but in Regard to the Usage of Life, they will have the clear *Idea* to be preferred. And upon this *Arcefilas* neither spoke nor thought otherwise than the *Scepticks*.

35. The fourth Difference consists Fourth Difference. not in the Thing, but in the Manner of it: for both allow they are drawn by some *Objects*, but the *Academicks* say this Attraction operates by exciting a vehement Propensity, which the *Scepticks* deny; as if one of the Parties was carried toward Probabilities, and the other only suffered themselves to be led; though both refuse their Belief, or Assent to either.

36. *Sextus Empiricus* instances more- Fifth Difference. over another Difference between them, upon Things which concern the End, saying the *Academicks* follow Probabilities in the Usage of Life; and the *Scepticks* yield Obedience to Laws, Customs, and natural Affections. In which, as in many other Matters, their Language is different, their Sentiments alike. For the *Scepticks* obey Laws, Customs, and natural Affections, because

cause it appears to them to be good, to follow the *Idea* imprinted in their Minds, by that *Image* or Appearance of Good, found in Affections, Customs, and Laws. Now to follow the mental *Idea*, is what the *Academicks* call to approve, or have an Opinion of: and this Appearance of Good, from whence that *Idea* is derived, they call probable.

Thus when the *Academick* obey'd Laws, he said he acted in that Manner, because in his Opinion it was good, and probably best to do so: and when the *Sceptick* did the same, he used not the Terms of Opinion and Probability, fearing lest that should lead him to own he yielded his Belief like the other. The End of the *Scepticks*, and of *Arcefilas* being alike for the *Epoche*, *i. e.* Suspension of Belief and its Attendant *Ataraxie*: *i. e.* Imperturbability, it was necessary that this should be approved by both, and so it was in Effect: for as well he as they agreed, particular *Epoches* to be Goods; and particular Assents or Consents Evils; and that it was necessary both should fly the one, and follow the other. Now to pursue a Thing, as a Good, whether you call it to approve, or to have an Opinion of, or whatever Name you are pleased to give it, the
 Thing

Things remains the same still without any Difference.

37. *Sextus* also reports another Dis-^{Sixth Dif-} agreement betwixt *Arcesilas* and the ^{ference.} *Scepticks*; in that both declaring the *Epoche*, or Retention of Belief to be good, and Belief or Assent evil: The *Scepticks* affirmed Nothing of this, but said that such a Thing appeared so to them; Whereas *Arcesilas* believed that it was in Reality, and in its own Nature, what he pronounced it. *Sextus* does not attribute this Sentiment to him but by Surmise and Conjecture, and *Aulus Gellus* (a) expressly asserts the contrary: for he writes that the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* maintained *Ideas* to be formed from external *Objects*, not according to the Nature of those *Objects*, but the Disposition of Bodies and Minds in whom they are formed.

Moreover, the Good of the End is relative, as we have said in speaking of the *Truth* of Things: The Good of the End relates to us, and there is no other Reason for calling a Thing good, but because it seems to be so to us. From whence it follows that *Arcesilas* could not estimate the Good of

(a) *A. Gell. lib. ii. Cap. 5.*

the End, otherwise than the *Scepticks* did. In short can we believe that *Arcefilas* thought Things carry any Good in their own Nature, he who was not perswaded they have any *Truth* in them?

As to what *Sextus* adds, that some have believed *Arcefilas* handled Matters according to the *Pyrrhonian* Method, when he treated his young Disciples, before they had taken the Taint of his Doctrine, so as to discover the Strength of their Parts, and finding them ingenious and subtil, instructed them in the Doctrine of *Plato* affirmatively, and after the Manner of the *Dogmatists*. *Sextus* himself owns that he reports this of *Arcefilas* on uncertain Hear-says. But after all, if it should be true, we ought not to judge of the Merit of a Doctrine, by the Inconstancy and Levity of the Doctor.

Seventh
Difference.

38. The last Disagreement of the *Academicks* and the *Scepticks*, is proposed to us by *Aulus Gellius* (a) a Gram-
marian much more than a Philosopher. It consists in this, that both granting Man cannot comprehend, nor determine any Thing, the *Academicks* allow they

(a) *A. Gell.* lib. ii. Cap. 5.

have *some Comprehension as it were* of that, and make some such *Decision*; Whereas the *Pyrrhonians* say even that does not appear in the least to be true, because to them Nothing is so.

In the first Place, I know what it is to comprehend and determine; but am ignorant what it is *to comprehend and determine as it were*. For if *to comprehend as it were* be to comprehend, what Need of obscuring the Signification of a Word so clear in it self, by that Addition? Besides, who will say the *Academicks* comprehend any Thing, making it their Profession to know Nothing, and not to know whether they do so or not? How could *Arcefilas* think of being able to comprehend any Thing, who would not allow even of our having Opinions?

But if *to comprehend as it were* be not to comprehend at all, there remains no farther Difference between the *Academicks* and the *Pyrrhonians*, since they all say they comprehend Nothing. But if *to comprehend a Thing as it were*, is to seem to the Mind that a Thing is so, as when any one says he *comprehends as it were* that a Thing is true, he means it seems to him to be true; and therefore *Aulus Gellius* pre-

I tends

tends it seems to the *Academicks* that they comprehend Nothing, and that it does not seem to the *Pyrrhonians* that they comprehend Nothing: This is the third Difference we have before instanced after *Sextus Empiricus*, and of which we have shewed the Nullity.

But if *to comprehend as it were* be as *Carneades* would have it to comprehend, but not without some Grounds for doubting, which he allowed to human Understanding, this is to abuse the Word *comprehend*; for such Comprehension is true Opinion. Since the Differences of the *Scepticks* and the *Academicks* are null then, or very small, it is not without Reason, that *Sextus* very knowing in the Matter, and who collected them, finds so great an Agreement between the Doctrine of *Pyrrho* and *Arcefilas*, that they may pass for one and the same Sect. *Seneca* (a) has writ likewise that they both turn on one and the same *Principle*, viz. of knowing Nothing: And lastly *Aulus Gellius* (b) teaches us that the Disciples of *Pyrrho* and *Arcefilas* went by the same Name of *Scepticks*, *Epheticks*, and *Apo- reticks*; and therefore as has been already observed, *Arcefilas* was placed in the Number of *Scepticks*.

(a) Senec. Eipst. 89. (b) A. Gell. Libr. ii. Cap. 5.

39. As to my self, so well knowing the Sect of the *Academicks*, and of the *Pyrrhonians* to have been the same, I am often surprized in thinking, why these *Philosophers* should be more willing to be called *Academicks* than *Pyrrhonians*, as if the Name of the one would be disgraceful, and that of the other honourable. Two Reasons of this Preference, appeared to me probable; one, in that very few *Philosophers* of any Reputation, proceeded out of the School of *Pyrrho*; whereas the *Academy* could boast of many excellent Men, to whom it was glorious to see itself associated; the other, that *Pyrrho* and the *Pyrrhonians* have been ridiculed, as if they had reduced the Life of Men to a State of absolute Inactivity: And therefore they who shall stile themselves *Pyrrhonians*, will necessarily incur the Fate of being laughed at.

Why the Philosophers, who make Profession of doubting, had rather pass for Academicks than Pyrrhonians.

40. But let us return to the List of those who signalized themselves likewise in the Art of *Doubt*. *Diogenes Laertius*, on the Authority of *Hippobotus* and *Sotion*, has given us a Series of this List down to *Saturninus Cythenas*, a Disciple of *Sextus Empiricus*, whose Works we have. He informs us *Menodotus* was deceived, when he writ that *Timon*

It is false that the Sect of the Scepticks, or Pyrrhonians was interrupted after Timon.

Of the WEAKNESS of

Disciple of *Pyrrho* had no Successor, and then the Sect was intirely extinct, 'till the Time of *Ptolemæus* of *Cyre* who re-established it; and that afterwards it maintained itself by a continued-Succession even to *Sextus*. For this *Ptolemæus* was a Disciple of *Eubulus*, *Eubulus* of *Euphranor*, *Euphranor* of *Timon*, under whom he had a great many Fellow Students.

All these *Philosophers* notwithstanding being of small Account, we are not to wonder, if *Cicero* so often tells us the Sect of *Pyrrho* was rejected and brought to Nothing long before his Time, and if *Seneca* (a) in his *Natural Questions* complains of it. 'Tis for the same Reason that *Aristocles* has writ, as *Eusebius* reports (b), i. e. that the *Pyrrhonians* abandoned and confounded, remained mute, as if they had never been, 'till the Time of *Ænesidemus* who revived their Sect at *Alexandria*.

Timon of
Phlius.

41. That we may not lose Time, we will speak only of the most celebrated, and principally of *Timon* of *Phlius*, who turned the Confidence of the *Dogmatists* to Ridicule, by burlesque Verses, called *Silles*. He taught that whoever aspires to be happy, must hold all Things

(a) Senec. Nat. Quæst. libr. vii. Cap. 32.
P1æp. Evang. libr. xiv. Cap. 18.

(b) Euseb.

for uncertain and indifferent ; that our Senses and Opinions do not shew us what is true or false ; and therefore we are not to bend our Minds, either to one or other ; must affirm Nothing, but whatever we speak of, are no more to say it is, than it is not : And that he who rests in this Disposition, shall not be exposed to any Trouble, or Inquietude of Mind.

42. *Nausiphanes* of *Teos* is likewise numbred among the Disciples of *Pyrrho*. *Seneca* (a) testifies he said with *Timon*, that among all Things which appear to us, we are no more to think they are, than that they are not. *Seneca* adds he asserted moreover, that this only is certain, that Nothing is certain. In which I will not believe *Seneca*, although he should give me his Oath: For to talk so, *Nausiphanes* must have returned to the old *Academy*, and forsaken the School of *Pyrrho*, who very constantly taught, that Nothing is certain. *Timon* and *Nausiphanes* were Followers of *Pyrrho*, and *Epicurus* of *Nausiphanes*.

Nausiphanes of *Teos*.

43. *Theodosius* of *Bithynia*, or *Tripoli*, adhered to the same Party. He was a refined Wit, and supported this Sect by excellent Works.

Theodosius of *Bithynia*.

(a) *Seneca* Epist. 89.

Aenesidemus of *Cnossus*.

44. The same School produced *Aenesidemus* of *Cnossus* too. At *Alexandria* in *Egypt* he relieved this Sect which then began to fail.

Ptolemy of *Alexandria*.

45. Some have joined *Ptolemy* the *Astronomer* to this List, who said Access to Sciences was denied human Understanding, either by Reason of its own Weakness, or the Obscurity of Things.

Cornelius Celsus. *Phavorinus*.

46, 47. *Cornelius Celsus* did the same at *Rome*, as *Aenesidemus* at *Alexandria*. *Phavorinus* did no less; for having declared himself a *Sceptick*, he very exquisitely explain'd the *ten Modes* of the *Pyrrhonians*, and maintained there is no Faculty in us, to comprehend any Thing.

Sextus Empiricus.

48. But Time having consumed all those Works, *Sextus Empiricus* repaired that Loss by Writings of his own, and by his excellent *Hypotyposes*, wherein the Form and Constitution of his *Philosophy* is exactly laid open; and in his *Dissertations* against the *Dogmatists*, which place in a clear Light the Vanity, and Uncertainty of those Sciences, which are esteemed most certain.

Whether

Sextus

Empiricus

is the same

as *Sextus* of

Chæronæa.

49. Many have thought that *Sextus Empiricus* and *Sextus* of *Chæronæa*, Son of *Plutarch's* Daughter, one of the Preceptors

ceptors of the Emperor *Marcus Aurelius* were the same. They lived in the same Time, bore the same Name, were *Philosophers*, and both had a Preceptor named *Herodotus*. *Suidas*, a frivolous Author, does no Injury to this Opinion, when he says that one of them was of *Chæronæa*, and the other of *Libya*. He might be said to be of *Libya*, by reason of the long Residence he made at *Cyrene*, a Town of *Libya*; as the illustrious *Pomponius* was surnamed *Atticus*, although a *Roman*, for remaining long at *Athens*.

The Objection that some raise from *Herodotus* being their Preceptor is not conclusive; for it is said that *Herodotus*, Preceptor of *Sextus* of *Chæronæa*, was of *Philadelphia*, and therefore different from *Herodotus* Preceptor of the *Libyan Sextus*, who was of *Tarsus*. *Philadelphia* and *Tarsus* were two Cities of *Cilicia*, not very distant, and from their Neighbourhood might easily be mistaken.

'Tis objected moreover, that *Sextus* of *Chæronæa* was a *Stoick*, and *Sextus* of *Libya* a *Pyrrhonian*: For *Capitolinus* says, that *Marcus Aurelius* was a Disciple of *Sextus* of *Chæronæa*, Nephew of *Plutarch*, of *Junius Rusticus*, of *Claudius Maximus*, and *Cinna Catulus*, all *Stoicks*. But this Objection is null, for

Of the WEAKNESS of

the Terms of this Passage in the Manner it is conceived, may very well signify that the three last were *Stoicks*, as they really were, but not *Sextus*; for *Suidas* informs us, that both the *Sextus*'s were *Pyrrhonians*.

They insist moreover that *Sextus* the *Pyrrhonian*, was surnamed *Empiricus*, and not *Sextus* of *Chæronæa*. But who knows not that Surnames are often omitted, as in these Passages of *Suidas*, and in the *Isagoge*, attributed to *Galen*, where no Surname is annexed to the Name of *Sextus*? *Casaubon* (a) adds to this that the Emperor *Marcus Aurelius* has writ, that he learned of *Sextus* the Method to find, comprehend, and place in Order Instructions necessary to Life; which cannot agree to *Sextus Empiricus*, who taught that we can comprehend Nothing, and rejected all Kinds of Tenets whatever.

But there is some Appearance that those mentioned Instructions were certain useful Rules for the Conduct of Life; but not Principles tending to the Search of *Truth*. For such is the Doctrine of the *Scepticks*, that we must suspend our Assent and Belief, when we seek *Truth*;

(a) *Casaubon* in *Capitol. Vit. Marc. Imper.*

but in the Conduct of Life, follow Appearances. On which Account I believe the Emperor spoke so of *Sextus*, with Design to shew, that although he was a *Sceptick* in his Doctrine, he was *Dogmatical* as to Manners.

The Proof *Salmafius* brings to shew these two *Sextus's* to be different, is no better than the former. He grounds it on *Sextus* of *Chæronæa* being contemporary with *Galen*, and that *Sextus Empiricus* was more ancient than he, being placed by him in his *Isagoge* in the Number of *Empiricks*. As if because quoted by *Galen*, he must have been before the Age of *Galen*, and that we seldom quote our Contemporaries. But dropping this Exception, it is enough to say, that this *Isagoge* seems to be the Work of another Author and not of *Galen*. In the mean Time I will assure Nothing herein, nor deviate so soon from the Law I establish to my self to doubt of all Things; leaving every one the Liberty of his own Judgment.

50. As to what remains, this *Sextus* of whom we speak joined the Profession of the *Sceptick Philosophy*, to that Sect of *Physicians*, who apply themselves to Experience, and are therefore called *Empiricks*, of which *Acron* of *Agri-*
gentum

Great Affinity between the Sceptical, the Empirical, and the Methodick Sect.

gentum and *Philinus* of *Coos* were the Authors. *Menodotus* of *Nicomedia*, *Saturinus Cythenas*, and that *Marcellus*, who to hide his Adherence to the *Sceptical* Doctrine, would be called *Empirick*; these three likewise joined, as *Sextus* did, the *Sceptical* Doctrine to the *Empirical* Practice of Physick.

The same *Sextus* (a) nevertheless maintains that the Sect of Medicine call'd *Methodick*, whereof *Themison* was Inventer, comes nearer to the *Sceptical* Doctrine, than the *Empirical* Sect, in Case the latter affirms Things uncertain cannot be comprehended: For the *Sceptick* Doctrine forbids the affirming any Thing. From hence it follows, that this Affirmation excepted, we shall find great Affinity between the *Sceptick* and the *Empirick*, as *Sextus* did between the *Sceptick* and the *Methodick*. And the more because we read in *Celsus* (b) that the *Empirick* taught as well as the *Sceptick*, that Nature is unsearchable, and nothing can be comprehended, (which is shewn by their Contests who have treated of these Matters) and likewise that the Practice of Medicine wholly depends on Use and

(a) *Sext.* *Empir. Hypot. Libr. 1. CAP. 4.*
Cels. de Re Medic. Præm. Libr. 1.

(b) *Cornel.*

Experience, and Reasoning has no Hand in it.

The same *Sextus* maintained in other Places, that the *Pyrrhonians* were not Ignorants, as was believed, but surpassed the rest of *Philosophers*, in the Use and Experience of Things, *i.e.* were Masters of the *Empirical* Doctrine in the strictest Signification of that Word, and that the *Empiricks* rejected all kinds of Reasoning, which is purely *Sceptical*, provided we intermix not any Manner of Affirmation.

51. *Lucian* of *Samosata* was Con- Lucian.
temporary with the now-mentioned. *Photius* (a) places him in the Number of those, whose Opinion was that we are to adhere to no Opinion.

52. *Uranus* openly professed himself Uranus.
a *Sceptick*. He lived in the Time of *Justinian*; and *Chosröes* King of *Persia*, a Lover of *Philosophy*, distinguished him with great Honours, favoured him with Presents, and Letters full of Expressions of Esteem, and was willing to be instructed by him. It is then Matter of Astonishment, that a King not unwise, nor illiterate, should have so great a Value for a Man so ignorant and incapable, as *Agathias* represents him (b). If what he says of him be

(a) Phot. Tmem. 128.

(b) Agath. libr. ii.

true,

true, the *Sceptick* Sect which he followed, must in it self be grateful to those *Barbarians*, even in a Man, who was but little instructed in it, and besides branded with Vice and Infamy. There were many other *Philosophers* also, who adhered to this Sect, the Discovery of which I leave to the studious and inquisitive.

And more-
over of the
Number of
the Dog-
matists
Porphyry.

53. Having run through the Sects of *Philosophers*, who are for our doubting all, and affirming Nothing, we return to the *Dogmatists*. As to the *Stoicks*, who though prostituting their Belief even to fabulous Stories, allowed not their Profelytes to be guilty of Precipitation of Judgment, and giving it a Name agreeable to that Caution, viz. *Aproptosis*, carefully recommended it to them; we shall hereafter meet with a very plain Confession of their Ignorance, and chiefly that of *Porphyry*, who would have been beyond Dispute a very great Man, laying aside his extreme Aversion to Christianity. He openly acknowledged in his Book of the Soul addressed to *Böethus*, that Nothing is certain, but all dubious in *Philosophy*.

Aristippus.

54. *Aristippus*, Author of the *Cyrenaick* Sect, of more Antiquity than *Porphyrius*, and after him *Aristo* of *Chios*,
taught

aught that the Works of Nature are to us incomprehensible, that we have no Business with *Logick*, but only with *Morality*, and that Part of it which treats of Virtues and Vices; would have us prefer Virtue to Vice, and look upon the rest as indifferent, not excepting Health it self, which as he thought ought not to be preferred before Sickness. In Things of this Nature he denies the Liberty of Choice and Preference.

55. *Herillus* of *Carthage* in like manner looked upon all Things as indifferent, and forbid the preferring one before another; except that *Science* only, in which he will have the supreme Good to consist.

Herillus of Carthage.

56. *Menedemus* of *Eretria*, Disciple of *Plato*, adhered to no Opinion.

Menedemus of Eretria.

57. 'Tis from him, and *Phedo* who preceeded him, that the *Eliack*, or *Eretrick* Sect was derived. It is of them, and the *Megaricks*, who followed the Doctrine of *Euclid* of *Megara*, and were named *Eristicks*, or *Dialecticks*: 'Tis of them, I say, that *Seneca* (a) has writ in these Terms: *It is almost the same Subject, that takes up the Pyrrhonians, Megaricks, Eretricks, and Academicks,*

The Eretrick and Megarick Philosophers.

(a) *Senec. Epist. 89.*

who are Authors of a new Science, which consists in knowing Nothing. And Cicero (a) in the Number of the Professors of this Science, inserts *Stilpo*, *Diodorus*, and *Alexinus*.

Monimus
the Cynick.

Monimus the Cynick, said with *Anaxarchus* that all Things depend on Opinions, are like certain Pictures, and differ not from the Visions of Madmen, or those who sleep; and that there is no Rule of Truth.

Among re-
mote Na-
tions, the
Magi.

59. If we pass to remote Nations, we shall find many of the same Sentiment, of suspending Judgment and Belief. *Diogenes* (b) *Laertius* relates that *Anaxarchus* and *Pyrrho*, learnt of the *Magi*, and *Gymnosophists* of the *Indies*, that excellent Method of *Philosophizing*, which forbids us to think we can comprehend, or that we should yield Assent and Belief to any Thing.

The Brach-
mans.

60. The *Brachmans*, according to the Testimony of *Strabo* (c) and *Megasthenes*, assert Nothing is good nor evil; because that which appears good to one, seems bad to another. What has been said makes it visible, that the *Sceptick Philosophy* penetrated even to the Extremities of the *East*.

(a) Cicero. Libr. iv. Acad.
rhon.

(c) Strabo Libr. xv.

(b) Diogen. Laert. in Pyr-

61. Among the *Turks* is a Sect of ^{Certain} Philosophers, called *Hairetis*, i.e. the ^{Turk Phi-} *Astonished*. Their Profession is to doubt ^{losphers,} of all; they never affirm any Thing, ^{named the} believing we cannot discern *Truth* from *Falshood*; according to them every Thing is probable, nothing certain; they obey Laws; but are over *Sceptical*, in that they make their Method of doubting extend even into the common Usages of Life.

62. Some *Jews* likewise retained this ^{Among the} Art of doubting. *Philo* reports the ^{Jews the} *Essens* held for a Maxim, that *Logick* is not necessary to acquire Virtue; the Knowledge of Nature being above human Capacity; and that therefore we should apply ourselves to *Theology*, which has respect to *God*, and the Creation of the World: This comes very near the Doctrine of *Aristo* of *Chio*.

63. The *Seboleans*, *Philosophers* of ^{And the} the same *Jewish* Nation, that is to say, ^{Seboleans} *Opiniators*, took the Method of the *Scepticks*, in treating of Matters *Theological*. Thus they examined the Doctrine of the *Talmud*, disputing *pro* and *con*, without any affirming.

64. *Rabby Moses*, Son of *Maimonides* ^{R. Moses,} who leaving the Impertinence of the ^{Son of Mai-} *Rabbins*, adhered to a Doctrine much ^{monides.}

more solid, said (a) all the Men in the World cannot attain the Knowledge of *Truth*, so narrow is human Capacity, and that therefore we should suppress all Thoughts which may turn us from the Service of *God*, and the Practice of his Law; that if Men follow their own Thoughts, the true Worship will be destroyed, and that such was the Meaning of *Moses* to the *Jews* in this Text; (b) *Apply yourselves not to seek after your own Heart and your own Eyes, after which you have been accustomed to seek*, i. e. lean not too much on your own Understanding which is weak and short, and think not to acquire the Knowledge of *Truth*.

And the
Discourfers,
among the
Arabs.

65. The *Arabs* likewise had their *Scepticks*, by the *Jews* called *Medabberim*, i. e. *Discourfers*, or rather *Logicians*, of whom *Averroës*, and *Moses* the Son of *Maimonides* frequently make Mention, and other *Rabbins* beside. We may justly call them the *Scholastic Divines* of the *Arabs*. Having learnt the Art of doubting from the ancient *Greeks*, and *Syrians*, they held Disputes continually with the *Dogmatists*, giving no Credit to the Senses and

(a) Maimonid. De Idolol. CAP. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

(b) Numb. xv. 39.

Understanding; holding it for a constant and capital Rule, that we can know Nothing. Infomuch that they even rejected all those *Geometrical* Demonstrations, which are taken to be infallible, as vain and deceitful. And what makes most for our *Subject*, the Chief of them who first received this Doctrine were principally so disposed, because it is very proper to captivate Mens Minds to the Obedience of *Faith* and Religion.





C H A P. XV.

1. *From all this 'tis concluded we must doubt, as the only Way to avoid Errors.* 2. *Of which the Forwardness of the Dogmatists has produced an infinite Number.* 3. *The Academicks, and the Scepticks affirming Nothing cannot be deceived; and they only deserve the Name of Philosophers.*

It is concluded from all which has been said, that we must doubt; and that it is the only Way to avoid Errors.

1. **I**T must be then agreed, that all *Philosophy* both sacred and profane; and not only the Professors of doubting, but the *Dogmatists* themselves would have us doubt, suspend our Judgment, and not yield Assent too lightly. For they plainly saw that we cannot correct nor avoid Errors, unless by one general and perpetual *Doubt*, we divest our Minds of all the Opinions we have been prepossessed with. Hereby *Des-Cartes* began the *Principles* of his *Philosophy*, being perswaded that by this Precaution we destroy the Root of Errors, and labour most secure-

securely in the Search of Truth. But this very Man who by wise Foresight was submissive to this Law of doubting, relinquished it afterwards, as if he had been to make no other Use of it, than to reject the Opinions of preceeding *Philosophers*; and as insignificant for the examining his own; so that by a Temerity like that of the *Dogmatists*, he committed the same Fault he reprehended in others.

2. As a Man who would go to a *Town* situated in the *Levant*, if ignorant of the Way, he travels towards the West, will be in less Error by sitting down in a cross Road, than if he continues his Journey, and takes one of the different Ways that comes before him. So human Understanding depressed to Earth by Confinement to a terrestrial Body, and confessing that hereby the Way to *Truth* is precluded from it, will more surely avoid Lapses and Errors by remaining in its Ignorance, and the *Doubt* which attends Ignorance, than by vain Attempts to break through the Obstructions, and instead of a *Juno* embrace Nothing in the End but a Cloud. Here's the Difference between the *Dogmatists* and the *Scepticks*: what monstrous Opinions

The Boldness of the Dogmatists has produced infinite Errors.

has not the Precipitation of the *Dogmatists* produced? of which *Cicero*, and *Varro*, Men of excellent Worth, and very well instructed in all Sects of *Philosophy* have writ, as I have already observed, that we can say Nothing so absurd, a Man in a Fever cannot conceive any delirious Dream, so strange, but somewhat like it has been advanced by some *Philosopher* or other.

The Academicks, and Scepticks, affirming Nothing cannot be deceived, and they only deserve the Name of Philosophers.

3. Both as to the *Academicks*, and *Scepticks*, what Absurdities and ridiculous Opinions can we reproach them with, since they maintain no Opinions? Truly they only merit the Name of *Philosophers*, if we stick to the true Signification of that Name. For *Philosophy* being Nothing else, according to the Import of the Word, but the Study of Wisdom and *Truth*; and Wisdom, as it is defined by the Ancients, being the Science of divine and human Things, and Causes depending on them, they who apply themselves to the Study of Wisdom, deserve the Name of true *Philosophers*; and they who have acquired the *Science* of divine and human Things, that is to say, Wisdom, are truly wise. Now it is this *Science* the *Dogmatists* boasted they had obtained, and even suffered themselves heretofore

to be dignified by the Name of *Sages* : a Name which *Pythagoras*, convinced of his Ignorance, was the first who rejected, to be called only a Lover of Wisdom.

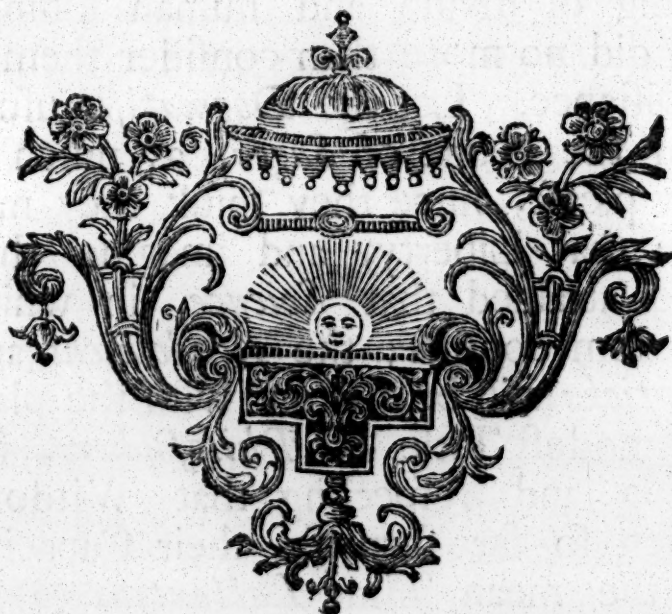
For as *Æschylus* (a) the Poet very well observed, *to know by Conjecture is different from knowing clearly*. That Knowledge properly belonged to the *Academicks*, who not only confessed they actually knew Nothing, but moreover that they could not know any Thing of divine and human Things, and did no more than consider them at a Distance. Let the *Dogmatists* usurp then the Name of *Sages*, as much as they please, since they think they may take that Liberty, and imagine they have attained that *Science*, in which Wisdom consists; the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* will be content with the plain and modest Title of *Philosophers*, for loving and respecting that Wisdom, which so far surpasses their Capacity. In the mean Time *Lactantius* (b) in speaking of them rightly said, that those

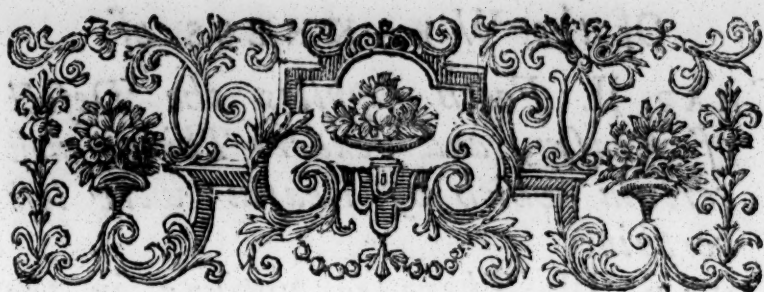
(a) *Æschyl.* *Agamemnon*.

(b) *Lactant.* lib. iv. Cap. 1.

who in some Measure knew themselves,
were wiser than such as thought them-
selves wise.

The End of the First Book.





OF THE
WEAKNESS
OF
Human Understanding.

BOOK II.

*The most sure and legitimate Way of
Philosophizing exactly explained.*

CHAP. I. *Man is by Nature destitute
of Means necessary to know Truth
most evidently and infallibly; which
though he may know in some Sort, he
cannot know it clearly and most cer-
tainly.*

Of the WEAKNESS of

CHAP. II. *Faith supplies the Defect of Reason, and renders Things most certain which by Reason were less certain.*

CHAP. III. *There is Nothing in the Understanding, which was not first in the Senses, 2. Against Plato, 3. Proclus, 4. and Des-Cartes.*

CHAP. IV. *In the Use of Life we must follow Things probable, as if they were true.*

CHAP. V. *Rule or Criterium of Probability.*

CHAP. VI. *What End to be proposed in the Art of doubting.*

CHAP. VII. *We are not to tie our selves to the Sentiments of any Author.*

CHAP. VIII. *In every Sect we must chuse that which appears to be best.*

CHAP. IX. *We must take Care to admit Nothing, contrary to Faith.*

CHAP. X. *The Sect of the Eclecticks has been followed by great Men.*

CHAP. XI. *Since we are not to tie our selves to the Academick, Sceptick, Eclectick, nor to any other Sect, we are to adhere to our own Thoughts.*

CHAP.



C H A P. I.

Man is by Nature unprovided of Means necessary to know Truth evidently and infallibly; which although he may know in some Sort, he cannot nevertheless know it clearly and most certainly.



AFTER our *Provincial* had talked at this Rate, as he was preparing to continue his Discourse; truly said I, this confident and imperious Method of *Philosophizing* I never relished, which so obstinately adheres to its own Thoughts and Opinions; and it seemed to me a much more compendious and direct Way to *Truth* to observe some Moderation in Opinions, with Modesty in Discourse, and never to maintain any *Tenet* how true soever, with so much Prejudice and Conceit, as not to be always ready to hear Objections, and even if requisite to change our Mind. But on the other Hand, methinks the Instability of the Doctrine
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of the *Academicks*, much more ready to say what they do not think than what they do, flings a great Deal of Darknes and Confusion in all Things, and destroys all *Science*, since according to them, we are no more assured we know what we know best, than if we knew Nothing at all of it.

For which Reason you will be kind if you please to teach me, to what Degree we are to carry *Doubt*. For if we always doubt, if every Thing be obscure, hidden, and uncertain; if all the Ways to *Truth* are stopp'd, there is an End of *Philosophy*; and all the Pains which have been taken for so many Ages to acquire the Knowledge of it, are totally lost. See his Answer.

This Complaint you bring against the *Academicks* is not new: and, if just, would affect Nature it self more than them. For is it the Fault of the *Academy*, if Man is by Nature so made, that he cannot of himself attain to the Knowledge of *Truth*? The *Academy* is no more answerable for this, than for Man's being unable to fly, or his not being immortal. Certainly we don't find the *Academicks* and the *Scepticks* gained less by the Study of Wisdom, or derived less Assistance from it, to become

become more wise and learned, than the *Dogmatists*. But of this hereafter. As to the present, since you would be informed how far I extend this Law of doubting, I am ready to explain my Opinion touching this capital Point, or rather Foundation of *Philosophy*: for we are alone, and I may speak with Freedom, and am not, neither ought I to be willing, to have what is said spread among the *Vulgar*.

By the *Vulgar*, I mean not the little People who live by Labour of their Hands; but the learned *Vulgar*, who are accustomed to look upon the *Scepticks* and *Academicks*, as Men that are beside themselves. This makes me not disrelish their Sect the more, of which I shall now proceed to explain the whole *System*, or rather my own. Being willing to let you understand, that in Point of *Philosophy* I would be free, follow my proper Sentiments, and be of no other Sect but my own.

First, I believe it sufficiently appears by all the Reasons I have produced, that the Nature of Man is such, that he cannot know *Truth* most certainly and infallibly by his own Power. I deny not but there is *Truth* to be found in Things themselves, I mean that which
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Of the WEAKNESS of

is called *Truth of Existence*: for God knows Things as they really are. But there is an Impediment in Man, which withholds him from it, and this Impediment consists in the Want of proper and necessary Means to know *Truth* perfectly.

I say not that Man can have no Knowledge of *Truth*; but only that he cannot know it to the Bottom, clearly, and with absolute Certainty, of which I have spoke already, and shall speak farther. For possible it is that a Person may have an *Idea* imprinted in his Mind, which shall be like to an external Object: like it, I don't say, with a perfect, proper, and absolute Resemblance, which cannot be met with but in Things of the same Kind, as for Instance between one Man and another, but I speak of an imperfect Resemblance; such as may happen between an *Original* and a *Copy*.

But when the Understanding in View of this *Idea* forms a Judgment of the external *Object*, from whence this *Idea* came, it cannot know most certainly and most clearly, whether this Judgment agrees with the external *Object* or not: and it is in this Agreement that *Truth* consists, as I have said. So that

if it does perceive *Truth*, it is not sure of it, neither can be; and therefore comprehends *Truth* very imperfectly. When I say then that Man cannot know Things nor the *Truth* of Things, I mean by a certain and clear *Cognizance*, whereby we not only discern *Truth*, but are assured moreover most certainly that we do. For to know *Truth* without being at the same Time sensible of it, is much the same as if you knew it not.

I have assign'd Proofs above, evident enough to shew that Man cannot be satisfied, whether the Judgment he forms in View of an *Idea* imprinted in his Mind agrees with the external *Object*, from whence that *Idea* proceeded. The Chief of those Proofs is, that we cannot apply the *Ideas* of Things, and the Judgment the Understanding forms in View of them to the Things themselves, to examine and discover the Agreement of this Judgment with the external *Objects*; in which Agreement we say *Truth* consists. For the *Species* or Images of Things, come not immediately into our Understanding from the Things themselves; but pass through many Mediums, as I have made appear, and through our Senses, which disfigure and disorder them. And there
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Of the WEAKNESS of
is no other Way, whereby the *Ideas* of
Things can come to our Minds.



CHAP. II.

Faith supplies for the Defect of Reason, and renders Things most certain, which by Reason are less certain.

BUT God by his Goodness repairs this Defect of human Nature, by granting us the inestimable Gift of *Faith*, which confirms our staggering Reason and corrects that Perplexity of Doubts which we must bring to the Knowledge of Things. For Example; my Reason not being able to inform me with absolute Evidence, and perfect Certainty, whether there are *Bodies*, what was the *Origin* of the World, and many other like Things: after I have received the *Faith*, all these Doubts vanish, as Darknefs at the rising of the Sun. This made St. *Thomas Aquinas* (a) say: *It is necessary for Man to receive as Articles of Faith*

(a) Thom. 22. Q. 2. A. 4.

not only the Things which are above Reason, but even those that for their Certainty may be known by Reason. For human Reason is very deficient in Things divine: A Sign of which we have from Philosophers, who in the Search of human Things by natural Methods, have been deceived, and opposed each other on many Heads. To the End then that Men may have a certain and undoubted Cognizance of God, it was necessary Things divine should be taught them by Way of Faith, as being revealed of God himself who cannot lie.

This seems to be taken from that Passage of St. *Augustine*, which I have already cited, but for its Importance, and Relation to the present Subject, ought to be repeated: viz. (b) *Because the Understanding of Men obscured by Habits of Darkness with which they are veiled in the Night of Sin, cannot steddily see the Clearness and Sanctity of Reason, it was a very wholesome Establishment to provide that our wavering View, covered with the Dust of Humanity should be conducted towards the Light of Truth by Authority.*

(b) *Augustin. De Morib. Eccles. Cathol. Cap. 2.*

Then

Of the WEAKNESS of

Then St. Thomas adds afterwards: *No Search by natural Reason is sufficient to make Men know Things divine, nor even those which we can prove by Reason.* And in another Place he speaks thus: (c) *Things which may be proved demonstratively, as the Being of God, the Unity of the Godhead, and other Points, are placed among Articles we are to believe, because previous to other Things that are of Faith: and these must be presupposed at least by such as have no Demonstration of them.*

What St. Thomas says of the Cognizance of divine Things, extends also to the Knowledge of human, according to the Doctrine of Suarez. (d) *We often correct, says he, the Light of Nature by the Light of Faith, even in Things which seem to be first Principles, as appears in this: those Things that are the same to a third, are the same between themselves; which, if we have Respect to the Trinity, ought to be restrained to finite Things. And in other Mysteries, especially in those of the Incarnation, and the Eucharist, we use many other Limitations, that Nothing*

(c) Thom. 2. 2 Q. 1. A. 5.
Fide, Sect. v. Art. ii.

(d) Suar. Disp. vi. de

may be repugnant to the Faith. This is then an Indication that the Light of Faith is most certain, because founded on the first Truth which is God, to whom it's more impossible to deceive, or be deceived, than for the natural Science of Man to be mistaken and erroneous.

(e) Saint Augustine likewise will not allow us even to attribute that Knowledge of Truth to Reason, which we believe our Understanding acquires by Reason, but to the Light of Truth it self, with which it is illuminated in Proportion to its Capacity.

To whom is Truth known without God? says Tertullian. (f) To whom is God known without Christ? To whom is Christ known without the holy Spirit? To whom is the holy Spirit communicated without Faith?

From whence the Apostle (g) after he had pronounced these Words, I will destroy the Wisdom of the Wise, and bring to Nothing the Understanding of the prudent; where is the Wise? where is the Scribe? hath not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World? And having warned us not to be captivat-

(e) Augustin. de Serm. Dom. in monte, lib. ii. Cap. 5.

(f) Tertuil. de Anim. Cap. 2.

(g) 1 Cor. i. 19, 20.

ted (a) through Philosophy and vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, and the Rudiments of the World, says, by Faith we stand (b), walk (c) by Faith, and not by Sight, and are stablished (d) in the Faith. As then in Matters of Faith, Faith comes in to the Aid of fluctuating Reason, so it assists us in all other Things we know thereby, to assure and relieve us in our Doubts, and reinstate Reason in a Right it was divested of, that is to say the Cognizance of Truth, which it naturally desires.



C H A P. III.

1. *There is Nothing in the Understanding which was not before in the Senses,*
2. *Against Plato,* 3. *Proclus,* 4. *and Des-Cartes.*

There is Nothing in the Understanding, which was not before in the Senses.

THEN said I, (for I often interrupted him) what is it I heard so lately advanced, viz. that there is no Way, whereby the *Ideas* of Things come to our Understanding, but through Mediums interposed between the Understanding and *Objects*, and through the Senses?

(a) Col. ii. 8.

(b) 2 Cor. i. 24.

(c) 2 Cor. v. 7.

(d) Col. ii. 7.

ses? Have we not *innate Ideas*, which never passed the Senses, as for Instance; the *Ideas* of *Angels*, and of *God* derived from our Understanding itself? As likewise of those *Maxims*, or common *No-* tions which *Logicians* call *Axioms*? Do we not know those universal Natures of Things, commonly called *Essences*, to be true, immutable, eternal, and not liable to Depravation by the Senses, like *Ideas* that come from without?

You anticipate, he answered: The Order of Things of which I promised you the Explanation, will lead me to that. Indeed this is a capital Question, and has been immensely discussed by the *Princes* of *Philosophy*. For *Pythagoras*, *Timæus*, and other *Pythagoreans*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, and all the *Platonicks* maintain, that we bring *Ideas* with us into the World. On the contrary, *Democritus* and his Follower *Epicurus*, *Aristotle*, and the whole School of the *Peripateticks*, rejected all *innate Ideas*, and acknowledged no other but those that came to us from without, passed through the Senses, and which we formed to our selves. I will give you my Opinion, since it is your Desire, and the Order of this Dispute leads us thereto. You will hear that which will not be to the Re-

lish of all the World, nor perhaps to your own Approbation.

As to *Plato's* Opinion touching inbred *Ideas*, that Sentiment seemed to me formerly to be much more honourable to Man, and to exalt his Dignity higher than the other, I greatly desired it might prove true: As appearing glorious to human Nature, that our Understanding should be given us, after its being first embelished by the Hand of God, and enriched with these Gifts of Heaven. I sought then for Proofs from all Quarters, to convince myself, and others also of the Truth of this Opinion. I found certain specious Reasonings in *Plato*, some in *Proclus* and other *Platonicks*, which might move one who was not very attentive. But those very Reasonings seemed to me of no Strength, when I ceased to give into that Pride which is natural to all Men.

Against
Plato.

2. The principal and only Argument almost which *Socrates* in *Plato* makes Use of, to prove we bring these *Ideas* into the World with us, prevailed with him to say, that human Understanding could not collect and conceive this innumerable Variety of Notions we have, in so short a Time as that of our Life, (being immersed as it is in the Mass of

our Bodies which depresses and clouds it) if it did not carry them already produced and formed in itself, and that accordingly we learn not what is taught us, but only remember it.

Such Discourse would better become an Orator who speaks in Publick, than a Philosopher. For who will deny these Things, and say with me that human Understanding is of such a Nature, that it is very easily put in Action, when the *Senses* being struck by exterior *Objects*, and the *Fibres* of the *Nerves* and *Spirits* moved, the Brain receives the Impression thereof; that the Understanding advertised by this Impression of the Brain of what passes without, agitates the *Spirits* in its Turn, and making a Review on the delicate Strokes traced and delineated in the Brain, joining what is separated, separating what is conjoined, comparing Things which are related, considers the present, and sees what precedes and follows it; on which depends the Conduct of Life, and the Affinity of Sciences: Who, I say, will hold this Language, what will *Plato* answer to this?

3. The Proofs *Proclus* produces, are of greater Weight. He says all that comes from the Senses is subject to

*Against
Proclus.*

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Change, and Man has *Ideas* or *Species* imprinted in his Understanding, which are eternal and immutable, namely the *Ideas* of *Figures*, *Numbers*, and *Motions*, and consequently could not issue from the Senses: Otherwise if *Ideas* so fixed and constant came from the Senses, so weak and subject to Error, the Effect would be more perfect than the Cause. But for my Part, I know Nothing of these eternal *Ideas*. For Instance; the Idea I have of a *Triangle*, a Thing obscure and confused, which is not circumscribed nor determined, was produced in me by the *Ideas* of particular *Triangles* I have seen. The same may be safely said of all those *Ideas*, which are taken to be of *simple and pure Intelligence*.

Proclus adds that the best Demonstrations are those which are composed of the most universal *Propositions*, and that the most imperfect Demonstrations are composed of particular *Propositions*: that at the same Time it would not be so, if Things universal were produced by particulars, seeing what is produced by the Cause is preferable to what is produced by the Effect. On this I will not dispute the Strength of Demonstrations, composed either of universal or particular

particular *Propositions* : I only declare that what is produced by the Cause is always preferable to what is produced by the Effect. For to feed a Sheep, the Grass is of more Worth, than the Earth which produceth it; So to form a Demonstration, universal *Propositions* are more useful than particular, although the universal are composed of the particular, and which depend on the Senses.

The third Argument of *Proclus*, is that if human Understanding receives from Matter and Things sensible its principal and most clear *Ideas*, and which moreover exist, Matter will have the Ascendant of the Understanding: It is the same as to say, that the Marble which the Carver *Praxiteles* made Use of, to form the Statue of *Venus*, was more noble than *Praxiteles*, because it virtually contained that Statue of *Venus* which *Praxiteles* drew from it.

4. *Des-Cartes* took a Way very different, but as uncertain as the former, if I am not mistaken. For of the three Kinds of *Ideas* he proposes, the first he will have to come from without, as the *Idea* I have of the Sun, and which was formed in me by the Sight I had of that Luminary; the second he will have to be factitious, and formed in us by

*And against
Des-Cartes.*

our selves, as the *Idea* of the Sun which is in the Understanding of the *Astronomer*, formed on his Reasonings and Observations; and the third he will have natural, or innate, as the *Idea* of God, and the *Ideas* of *Geometrical Principles*, and of *Essences*, of these three Kinds of *Ideas*, I say, proposed by *Des-Cartes*, 'tis clear that the two first come from the Senses. As to the third, if we consider it with Attention, we shall find that according to the very Reasonings of *Des-Cartes*, it may very well come from thence too. For since according to him these natural or innate *Ideas*, are the very Faculty of thinking which is in our Understanding, it follows that the *Idea* we have of *God*, is Nothing else but the Faculty in us of forming Thoughts of *God*; as other natural *Ideas*, which are in our Understanding and born with us, are Nothing else but the Faculty we have of forming Thoughts of them.

Now this Faculty of thinking, to whatever *Subject* we apply it, of which we can have any Thought or Conception, be it of *God*, *Man*, or the *Sun*, is always the same Faculty. As that of singing; whether we tune a Courant, a Saraband, or a Minuet, is always the same

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Faculty. This being so, since the Faculty which is in me of forming Thoughts, either of the *Sun*, or of a *Man*, came to me from without; by Consequence the *Idea* of *God* which is in me came from without.

Des-Cartes himself acknowledges there is no Difference between these *Ideas*, when he says, that even the *Idea* we have of a *Man*, or the *Sun*, comes not to us from without, but that our Understanding forms them to itself, after it has been excited, and stirred by certain corporeal Motions; and that for much greater Reason, the same must be said of the *Ideas* of Things, which are not formed by our Understanding, after it has been excited by corporeal Motions: such as the *Idea* of *God*, the *Ideas* of *Essences*, and of the *Axioms* of *Geometry*: Which *Des-Cartes* could not say without attributing the same *Origin*, and the same Nature, both to *Ideas* that come to us from without, and to those he calls natural, which he pretends to be inbred, or born with us.

As to my self, having learned that excellent *Philosophers* have been convinced, that human Understanding was invested and adorned with all these Advantages, not by the Favour of the Senses,

ses, but from its *Origin*, I often, and for a long Time used my utmost Endeavour to discover these hidden Treasures of my Mind, and to distinguish the Endowments I received of Nature, from those which came to me from without, and were acquired. But whatever Diligence I brought to this Enquiry, I could find no *Idea* in my self, that appeared not most clearly to come from without, and whereof I knew not the Rise in the external *Objects* to which it was to be ascribed, and the Way likewise whereby it found Entrance into my Understanding.

I believed then I might judge of the Understanding of others by my own. For I may safely affirm, that whoever will lay aside Self-love, not think too well of himself, and look into the inmost Recesses of his Mind, will find no *Idea* therein that was not formed upon the *Species* of external *Objects*.

Those of a contrary Opinion ask, from whence I had the Idea of a *Triangle*. I answer, it came to me from an infinite Number of *Triangles* I have seen, from whence I made to myself an obscure and confused *Idea* of a *Triangle*, which was not bounded, nor circumscribed by determinate Limits. They
ask

ask from whence I had the *Idea* of a particular Number, as of *four*. I answer, it came to me from the Multitude of Things I have seen of that Number, as the four Feet of a Horse, the four Angles of a Square, or likewise I may have formed it by my own Understanding, which might easily to two Things I have frequently seen, add two other; or one to three; and afterwards conceive that Number abstracted and separate.

They ask how I came by the *Idea* of Motion. I answer, it came to me from many Motions of Bodies I have seen; from whence my Understanding separating Motion from the Thing moved, formed a certain *Idea* of Motion; not a clear, pure, and express *Idea* of it, but imperfect and confused.

They ask from whence I had this Notion, that two Things equal to a Third are equal between themselves. I answer, it came to me by many Observations made of Things, measured on the same Standard and found to be equal; besides my Understanding was no less able to form it of its own Strength, by figuring some imaginary Measure, to which it mentally applied two Things, and finding them equal to this Measure, they appeared to be equal between them-

themselves. And from thence that general unfixed Notion, abstracted from all Kinds of external *Objects* was formed in me, *viz.* that as oft as two Things agree with a third, they agree between themselves.

They ask me how I came to the *Idea* of a *God*, and Things incorporeal. *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (a) answers excellently well, that *Things incorporeal of which there are no Species, are known to us by comparing them to sensible Bodies, whereof there are Species: As we know Truth by Consideration of Things, in which we contemplate Truth.* He adds moreover, according to the Opinion of *St. Denys*, that we know *God* as *universal Cause*, and to speak in the Language of the *Schools*, by *Excess and Abstraction*; and that while we are confined to this mortal Body, we have no Knowledge of Things incorporeal, but by *Abstraction and Comparison to the corporeal*, and it is necessary for this End to have *Recourse to Species of Bodies, Things incorporeal having no Species.*

But too much of this, although it be a capital Point; for there are those who

(a) Thom. Part 1. Q. 84. A. 7. and 8.

from this vain Fiction of natural *Ideas*, draw strange Conclusions. Let us then return to our *Subject*, said our *Philosopher*, unless you have any Thing to offer.

I answered, I have Nothing to object now against the *Thesis* you maintain; that all we conceive passed the Senses, either in the Whole or in Part: for I desire your Sentiments, having no Need at this Time to propose my own. Proceed then if you please to explain what is behind. And thus he began.

It ought then to be granted that we cannot know *Truth*, and therefore whatever Diligence and Attention we apply to obtain it, whatever Likelihood or Evidence we meet with, we are not absolutely to yield Assent, but always to be on our Guard. It follows too from what has been said, that those who undertake the Search of *Truth* exempt from all Doubt, give themselves useless Trouble; *Truth* being above the Reach of human Capacity. As to the rest, what I said in the Introduction of this Discourse, in Relation to the several Degrees and Kinds of Certainty, must not be forgot: For we treat at present of supreme and absolute Certainty of most
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consummate Perfection, which neither Reason, nor the Senses can give, and we shall never enjoy, 'till we are united to God, who is the Fountain of *Truth*.

But I deny not that while we are immersed in this Body, our Understanding may attain to that supreme human Certainty, (a) *which though covered with Darknefs in the Night of Sin, and obscured by the Vail of Mortality*, (as St. *Augustine* speaks) has its Penetration, and can turn its Eyes towards *Truth*, if not steadily, and without being dazl'd, at least with lively and piercing Views. As from *Libya*, a Promontory of *Sicily*, altho' I cannot discern nor number the Vessels that go out of the Port of *Carthage*, I can do it when I come near them: And although I cannot look on the Sun, I can on the Moon and Stars. The Understanding is the Eye of the Soul: *Truth* the Sun whose Rays our Sight cannot bear, if they are not broke or modified, either by Reflection, Refraction, or the Interposition of some Medium, to proportion and adapt them to our Weakness.

(a) *Augustin. De Morib. Eccl. Cathol. Cap. 2.*



C H A P. IV.

*In the Use of Life we should follow
Things probable as true.*

OUR Intent is not then to extinguish all the Light of the Mind; we cannot believe our Understanding is in perpetual Error, destitute of all Counsel and Rule for the Conduct of Life; not knowing even which Way to turn, as those who are misinformed of our Sentiments frequently object. We move not by the Light of the Sun, at Noon Day, yet walk at least in the reflected Light of the Moon; and if we want a certain Knowledge of *Truth*, we have at least some likelihoods of it.

To say such and such Things appear to us to be true, is not saying they are so: For to appear, and to be, are very different. Moreover that these Things do so much as appear to be true I do not affirm; but only that they seem so to me. For as I own what is likely is uncertain, I own also the *Idea* of Likelihood is uncertain. In so much that when I declare

declare a Thing seems to me to be probable, at the same Time I think it liable to Uncertainty. Now those Likelihoods and Probabilities we are to follow in the Usage of Life for Want of Truth, whether it be when the natural Inclinations of our Understanding and Senses incite us, when pressed by the Cravings of our Appetites, as by Hunger and Thirst; when we are to observe Customs and Laws; or to practise necessary Arts. On the other Hand we ought to reject as false, what has neither Likelihood nor Probability: And not remain utterly inactive, like Stocks and Stones.

When we are asked then, whether we allow of Opinion, we would have this Term *Opinion* be freed from wrong Acceptations to which it is subject. For *Opinion* is called the Consent which may be given to Things doubtful, in Study, and Disputations of *Philosophy*, and the affirming a Thing uncertain to be true: Now a wise Man ought to divest himself of these Kinds of *Opinions*. And here that Saying of *Theognis* is applicable; *Opinion is a great Evil among Men, but Experience on the contrary most useful.* For in Point of *Truth*, the chief Law is not to yield our Belief and Assent

Assent lightly and inconsiderately, and to affirm Nothing rashly. If by the Word *Opinion*, be understood the Determination and Resolution we take to follow what is probable in the Use of Life, we forbid not such Opinions.

A like Distinction must be brought to the Terms of *Belief* and *Consent*. If that had been done, an End might have been put to great Contests which very much exercised the ancient *Academicks*. We are then to apply the same Care and Diligence to discern Things probable, as some would have us bring to the Search of *Truth*. And as others regulate their Lives on what they believe to be true, we square ours by what appears to us most likely. And are not to be called *Zetetics*, that is to say, *Seekers*, but for endeavouring to find what is probable.



C H A P. V.

Rule or CRITERIUM of Probability.

AS the *Dogmatists* have a CRITERIUM, or Rule to discern *Truth* from *Falshood*, whether it be the Senses,
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the Understanding, or both: we also have a Rule of *Truth* to discern Things probable from those which are not so. What I have already said, makes it sufficiently intelligible, that there are two Rules, not to mention any more; the one near, the other remote: The near is the Disposition of the *Fibres* of the Brain, and Form of the *Traces*, which either the *Nerves* or *Spirits*, shaken by external *Objects*, and by Means of the Senses have left in the Brain; and the *Ideas* produced thereby. For the Understanding perceiving these *Ideas* and these *Traces*, forms its Judgment on their Cause, Origin and Signification, making a suitable Estimate of the *Species* of Things; whereon Probability depends. The remote Rule of *Truth* to discern it, are the Senses; which struck by external *Objects*, make certain *Traces* in the Brain by the *Nerves* and *Spirits*, which when perceived, the Understanding judges of external *Objects*.



C H A P. VI.

*The End proposed in the Art of
doubting.*

HAVING proposed the Rule of *Truth* which makes the Plan of our Doctrine, we must likewise explain the End of it. What all the Parts of a *System* aim at, I call its End, as being the last Thing we would obtain by it. Now this *System* has two Ends likewise, the one near, the other remote. The near, is the avoiding Error, Obstinacy, and Arrogance. The remote, to prepare the Mind for the Reception of divine *Faith*. For since we were created by *God*, to love and serve him during this Life, and to enjoy eternal *Beatitude* after Death, the Doctrine I establish, furnishes us with great Assistance for this Purpose. For *God* has given us in our Birth and Nature a great Desire of *Beatitude*, there being no Person whatever who would not be happy. And because the Knowledge of *Truth* is one Part of *Beatitude*, even so far that

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some, and those not contemptible *Philosophers*, have made their *chief Good* to consist in the Acquisition of *Science*, we find a great Desire in our selves to know *Truth*, and a great Propensity to seek it.

But as this mortal Life is not capable of *Beatitude* nor *Truth*, we have then no more than a natural Inclination to know it, and this Inclination is a Spur that excites us to seek *Beatitude*, wherein the perfect Knowledge of *Truth* consists. For *Beatitude* consists in the *Vision* of *God*, the eternal, immense, and inexhaustible Fountain of *Truth*. To excite and feed this Desire of knowing, he has annexed to Man's Understanding, some Sparks and Seeds thereof, to keep it alive, and an obscure and dubious Apprehension of Things, insufficient to give us the Knowledge of *Truth* with absolute Certainty, and perfect Evidence; but enough for the Conduct of Life; and whereby Man being advertised of his Weakness and Ignorance, should entertain a just Distrust of his Reason, avoid Error, Precipitation of Judgment, Imprudence of Assent and Belief, laying aside all Obstinacy; and being made sensible of the little Assistance he can obtain from his own Reason for the Discovery of

Truth,

Truth, finds himself obliged to seek Means more conducive to that End.

Now the grand Expedient is *Faith*, whereby Man during his Life gains some Knowledge of *God*, and Things *divine*; and having finally acquired *Beatitude* after Death, enjoys the perfect Knowledge of *Truth*. For, as the *Apostle* (a) teaches us, *we know now but in Part: but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in Part shall be done away. For now we see through a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face.* But *Faith* is a Gift that *God* is pleased to grant them who trust not too much to the Strength of Nature, presume not too far on the Penetration of their Reason, nor espouse their own Sentiments with affected Obstinacy, but diligently prepare their Minds to receive it. And this Effect, that *Art* of *doubting* we here establish, produces.

Adhering then to Things probable for Want of true, let us make Use of that incompleat and imperfect Knowledge *God* has allowed us, and which suffices for the Conduct of Life, and is principally useful to subject our Understanding to *Faith*. Let us also em-

(a) 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10, 12.

ploy this imperfect Knowledge in the Study of *Philosophy*, lest we take Things unknown for known, and fall into Error, which we should be ashamed not to avoid when it is in our Power.



C H A P. VII.

Not to tie our selves to the Sentiments of any Author.

ABOVE all Things, let us take Care not to tie our selves to the Sentiments of any *Author*, nor be a Party in any Sect, especially of the *Dogmatists*, who believing they can by the Help of Reason, attain to a certain and unquestionable Knowledge of *Truth*, fail in Principles and stumble in the very Preliminaries of *Philosophy*. Neither are we to give up our selves so far to the *Academicks* and *Scepticks*, as not to be ready to forsake them, if we are to do so upon weighing all Things in a just Ballance, ever reserving to our selves an absolute Liberty of thinking
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and speaking on all Matters of *Philosophy*.

For as *Arcefilas* left the System of *Pyrrho*, *Carneades* that of *Arcefilas*, *Philo* that of *Carneades*, and *Antiochus* that of *Philo*, it is but just that we should have the same Right. For Example, we forsake the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* for making Profession of examining and considering all Things in Search of *Truth*, which procured them the Name of *Zeteticks*, i. e. Seekers: For what *Truth* have they found by so long and constant a Search? They should have said they endeavoured to avoid Falsity and Error, and not that they sought *Truth*. We avoid both, by suspending our Judgment, and withholding Belief and Consent, which is in our Power: but it is not in our Power to come to a clear and certain Knowledge of *Truth*, as I have made appear. A most vain and frivolous Attempt it is to seek what we cannot find.

We leave the *Scepticks* moreover on many other Heads, but principally as to what respects the Advantages they propose to themselves; these they will have to consist in a fixed and constant State of Mind, subject to no Trouble: in Things that depend on *Opinion*, they

call it *Ataraxie*; and in Things which are forced, and do not depend on us, they call it *Metriopathy*; that is to say Moderation and Resolution to bear them. But we make the Advantages we propose to our selves consist in avoiding Obstinacy and Arrogance, and in preparing the Mind to receive *divine Faith*.



C H A P. VIII.

We ought in every Sect to chuse what appears to be best.

W Ithout adhering to any Sect, we examine all, and gather out of each for our Use what has some Appearance of *Truth*; and all our Attention we apply to what is said, without siding with him who said it. So that if by our Industry we can find any Thing of Use, we hold to it, and do not relinquish our own Interest: yet without ever deviating from this Sovereign Law of *doubting*, always ready to reject what we have approved, 10
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soon as we find somewhat more probable :) still reserving an absolute Liberty of Judgment, never submitting to Necessity nor Authority.



CHAP. IX.

Above all we are to beware of admitting any Thing contrary to Faith.

WE take a great Deal of Caution more especially, to admit Nothing contrary to revealed *Faith*: holding for most certain and unquestionable what *God* has introduced into our Souls by *Faith*, the Guide and Mistress of Reason; and looking on every Thing which Reason teaches us as dubious.



CHAP.



CHAP. X.

The Sect of the Eclecticks embraced by great Men.

AS to the Rest, in this free and unconfined Way of *Philosophizing*, running through all Sects we follow the Example of many great Men: especially of *Plato*, who formed his out of the Opinions of *Pythagoras*, *Epicharmus*, *Parmenides*, *Heraclitus*, and *Socrates*, and enriched it with the Doctrine of the *Egyptians*. For he took the Method of applying Numbers, and geometrical *Demonstrations* to Things natural; and of examining the Nature of what we conceive by our Understanding from *Pythagoras*: the Way of studying the Causes and Effects of our Sensation from *Heraclitus*: had the Doctrine of *Ideas* from *Epicharmus*: *Morality*, *Politicks*, and *Oeconomicks* from *Socrates*: borrowed the Manner of explaining his Doctrine, by Fictions and Fables, of the *Egyptians*.

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Although *Cicero* was for being esteemed an *Academick*, he was conversant nevertheless in the Schools of other *Philosophers*; drew from thence and appropriated to himself every Thing that was to his Relish: for he would have passed for a *Socratick* and a *Platonick*. Adhered sometimes to the *Stoicks*, and sometimes entirely to himself. *Horace* (a) follows not *Aristippus* and *Epicurus* so faithfully as not to be a *Peripatetick* or a *Stoick*, without espousing the Doctrine of either. *Seneca* (b) openly declares he subscribes to no Man, and would not bear the Name of any Sect; says he has very much Deference for the Judgment of great Men, but some for his own; that he keeps in his own Road; hearkens to and depends wholly upon himself to find out some new Discovery, and to alter and relinquish it as he thinks fit; that he is not a Slave to those who have gone before him, although he may assent to them.

Did any one propose somewhat to Purpose, he embraced and applied it to his own Use: Said that we must do the

(a) Horat. Carm. libr. i. od. 34. & Epist. libr. i. Epist. 1.
 (b) Seneca. Epist. 16, 21, 33, 46, 80. de Otio. Sap. 30.

same in *Philosophy* as in the Senate House: when any one there proposed his Advice which one Party liked, and another did not; the Advice was considered, and that taken out of it which was thought to be most serviceable; for to tie one self inseparably to any other Person, is not Association, but Faction: ridiculed those servile Philosophers who always tread in other Mens Steps in that important *Search* they undertake; I mean the Search of *Truth*, which Men do still seek, and have sought so long, but will never find; particularly if they rest satisfied with what is already discovered: Forbids not walking in the beaten Track: but if we meet with another that is more uniform, would have us follow it. Although he sided with the *Stoicks*, often forsook them, and became an *Epicurean*.

I cannot excuse my self from citing *Origen* (c), who was accustomed to ransack the Schools of *Philosophers*, and carry off some Prey or other. Imitating the Practice of *Clemens Alexandrinus* (d) his Master, who thought that the only Sect worthy of the Name of

(c) Origenian. libr. ii. Cap. 1. §. 4.
Alex. Strom. libr. i.

(d) Clem.

Philoso-

Philosophy, which did not cry up *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Epicurus*, or *Zeno* for its Author, but took what was best out of all, and is called *Eclectick*. *Lactantius* (e) is of the same Mind; declares he will follow those who collect that *Truth* which is scattered in the different Sects, and reduce it into one Body; but says this must be done by a Man who knows *Truth*; and that none can know it, but he who is instructed of God: sharply reproves those who adhering to a particular Party, reject all other as vain and false, ignorantly oppose and refuse by Prepossession the Reasons of their Adversaries.

In that Sect of *Physicians* called *Methodick*, which comes very near to the Doctrine of the *Scepticks* according to the Testimony of *Sextus Empiricus*, some have professed themselves to be *Eclecticks*. *Archigenes* of *Apamea* was of this Number. That new Society of *English Philosophers*, which has produced so many excellent *Vertuosi*, condemns the Arrogance of the *Dogmatists*, and without adhering to any Sect, is wholly taken up in chusing and cultivating what has been found hitherto to be best, or

(e) Lactant. lib. vii. Cap. 7.

to discover some Thing better, is more worthy to be followed than those who went before them. If I add to this List all who are not so devoted to any Sect, as not to reserve to themselves the Liberty of making Inroads into other and plundering them, their Number will be infinite.

Against this Method, Somebody will alledge to me the Contradiction which must be found amongst these collected *Opinions*. For being drawn from different Principles, it is not likely they should agree. But my Meaning is that we should begin this Choice by the Principles themselves: for after we have settled them, we shall not admit of any *Opinions* which agree not with themselves, and these Principles too. If any one, for Example, allows a *Vacuum* with *Democritus*, he will be ridiculous if he maintains with *Des-Cartes*, that the Nature of Bodies consists in their Extent, in Longitude, Latitude, and Profundity.

We shall be very much mistaken if we believe that *Potamon*, and the *Eclecticks*, of whom he was the principal, were so inconsiderate as to embrace repugnant and contradictory *Opinions*. He formed a certain *System*, the Elements

ments of which he included in a little Book. Without doubt there was to be found in it some Relation and Agreement between the Parts of the *System*. We must believe the same of the other *Eclecticks*, who were so circumspect therein, that they submitted not even to all the Opinions of *Potamon*, but only to his Method of taking from all Hands what seemed to be best. As to my self, though I very much approve this Way, I pretend not to pass for a *Potamonician* or an *Eclectick*; for that would be to be tied to a Sect, which I would avoid above all Things, for Fear of depriving my self of my own Sentiments.

Besides, there is some Appearance that *Potamon* was a *Dogmatist*: and it may be well conjectured from those who have collected the principal Heads of his *System*, not mentioning any one of them that agrees with the Sects which establish the Law of *doubting*; and you shall hardly find one Man among the *Eclecticks*, who adhered to the *Academicks* or the *Scepticks*. In short there are many Points, as to which I am of very different Sentiments from those of *Potamon*, and the other *Eclecticks*.



C H A P. XI.

Since we are not to adhere either to the Sect of the Academicks, Scepticks, Eclecticks, or to any other, we are to adhere to our own Opinions.

IF any one should ask me now what I am, not being either an *Academick*, *Sceptick*, *Eclectick*, or of any other Sect; I must answer I am my own, that is to say at Liberty, unwilling to submit to any Authority, and approving Nothing but what appears to me to come nearest to *Truth*. If any one out of Mockery or Flattery, call us *ἰδιωγ-νόμους*, *i. e.* wedded to our own Sentiments; I have Nothing to say against it.

The End of the Second Book.



OF THE
WEAKNESS
OF
Human Understanding.

BOOK III.

The Objections of our Adversaries proposed, and refuted.

CHAP. I. *First Objection, that we destroy the Use of Life.*

CHAP. II. *Second Objection, that we deprive our selves of Science.*

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CHAP.

CHAP. III. *Third Objection, that we have a Criterium, or Rule of discerning Truth from Falshood.*

CHAP. IV. *Fourth Objection, that our Manner of Philosophizing makes no Sect.*

CHAP. V. *Fifth Objection, that when we say there is no Truth, Falshood, nor Demonstration, we condemn our selves.*

CHAP. VI. *Sixth Objection, that we can scarcely doubt without Impiety, if God has not made Man, so as to be always deceived.*

CHAP. VII. *Seventh Objection, that this Law of doubting, seems to hinder the Mind of Man from submitting to Faith, and to favour Immorality.*

CHAP. VIII. *Objections of our Adversaries answered.*

CHAP. IX. *First Objection.*

CHAP. X. *Second Objection.*

CHAP. XI. *Third Objection.*

CHAP. XII. *Fourth Objection.*

CHAP. XIII. *Fifth Objection.*

CHAP. XIV. *Sixth Objection.*

CHAP. XV. *Seventh Objection.*

CHAP. XVI. *Why the Doctrine of the Academicks and Scepticks, has been rejected.*

CHAP. XVII. *Conclusion.*

CHAP.



C H A P. I.

First Objection, that we destroy the Use of Life.

BElieve not, my Friends, I complied with this captious Doctrine with no Reluctancy, to betray true *Philosophy* by a cowardly Silence. On the contrary I zealously held with the *Dogmatists*. I will give you an Account of the Sequel of our Conference. For our *Provincial* believing he had exhausted this Matter, absolutely convinced me, and established his *System* beyond all Contradiction; closed his Dissertation with these Words: You have heard the Discourse of a Man who seems perhaps to want Modesty, having been bold to place my self before you, not only as an Arbitrator, but even as a Cenfor and Reformer among so many able *Philosophers*. But it was your Province to prescribe, and mine to obey; I thought I should incur a less Fault in undertaking to examine these perplexed and difficult Questions, than to fail

in just Respects to the Desire of a Person I profess my self to love and honour.

Most certainly, said I to him, you have done me a great Favour by entering into Inquiries that have agreeably instructed me, and upon which it will be very delightful hereafter, to make both long and serious Reflections. But think not your self wholly discharged from this Trouble you have been pleased to engage in at my Request. For you are now to oppose a Batallion of *Dogmatists*, a mutinous and untractable Race, whose Attacks I fear you will not be able to sustain. Here's the first Assault they will make: You have clearly foreseen; but seem not to have totally avoided it. They say the *Philosophy* you follow, allowing us not to hearken to the Testimony of our Senses, puts out the Eye of the Understanding, confounds *Truth* with Falshood, deprives Man of his own Approbation and Judgment, and consequently *overthrows all the State of Life*, to speak with *Tertullian* (a); disturbs the whole *Oeconomy* of Nature, takes away all Kind of Action, and allows Nobody the Liberty to move.

(a) Tertull. De Anim. Cap. 17.



C H A P. II.

*Second Objection, that it deprives Men
of Science.*

WE dissent not, say you, from Customs, obey Laws, and comply with other Men, lest we should stand fixed to the Earth like Stocks of Trees. But then you deprive your selves of *Science* and the clear Light of the Understanding, without leaving in it the least Spark to assist you to discern *Truth*. It was for this Reason chiefly that in Process of Time, the Sect of *Pyrrhonians* was extinguished, or rejected by the *Pagans*. For if it had been received all other *Sciences* must have been abandoned. Therefore few or no learned Men have been known to come out of the Schools of *Scepticks*, nor likewise from the modern *Academy*, which I agree with you to have been true *Pyrrhonism*.



C H A P. III.

Third Objection, that we have a CRITERIUM, or Rule of discerning Truth from Falshood.

IN saying you follow Likelihoods for Want of *Truth*, is to us of as little Satisfaction. For if you allow that there is some Appearance of *Truth* in Things, you will be obliged to own you have some Rule to discern *Truth* from Falshood. For this Appearance or Signature of *Truth*, what is it else but a Distinction of *Truth* from Falshood? So that if I bring you to confess, there is some Rule of distinguishing *Truth* from Falshood, there is an open Access to *Truth*.

See what follows from hence: when you find an Appearance of *Truth* in any Thing, which gives you Room to say that Thing is likely and probable, you comprehend and perceive it to be so; affirm afterwards what you comprehended and perceived, so as to pursue the same in the Use of Life, and by Consequence

sequence give your Assent and Belief to it. And when you say there are certain Things which are likely, but have Nothing of *Truth* in them, and that all is uncertain, you pronounce that is a *Truth*: for if you give it as a Falsity, we abide there, and have no Need of another Answer.

Why then do you maintain that Nothing is to be known? Nothing to be affirmed, since it is visible that you comprehend and affirm this? So these Doubts and Obscurities vanish, the Foundations of *Science* firmly stand, and all the Subtilties of the *Academicks* and *Scepticks* fall to the Ground.



C H A P. IV.

The fourth Objection, that our Manner of Philosophizing makes no Sect.

TIS a great Reproach to your Manner of Philosophizing, that it makes no Body, nor true System of Doctrine; for being loose, vague, uncertain, unfixed, without *Principles*, an Enemy to all other Sects, can it assume

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the Title of a Sect, which it refuses to
all other ?



C H A P. V.

*Fifth Objection, that when we say No-
thing is true nor false, and that there
is no Demonstration, we condemn
our selves.*

Moreover you that lay Wait for all
other *Philosophers*, intangle your
selves in your own Snares, from which
you cannot be extricated by all the
Art in the World. For when you say
there is Nothing true nor false to be
comprehended by human Wit; either
that is true, or false. If it be true, some-
what then is true, and therefore you are
deceived when you say that there is No-
thing true nor false. If it be false, you
are deceived still, by advancing a Thing
which is false. You fling your selves
into the same Perplexity, by saying there
is no *Demonstration*. For either the
Arguments you bring to prove it, do
so, or not. If they do prove it, since
to prove by Arguments is to demon-
strate, you must own that there are
Demon-

Demonstrations. If they do not prove it, since you vainly undertake to shew there are no *Demonstrations*, you will be forced to acknowledge there are *Demonstrations*.



C H A P. VI.

Sixth Objection, that we can scarcely doubt without Impiety, if God has not made Man in such Sort as to be always deceived.

BEhold another Battery raised against you. If *God* made Man so as to be always deceived even in Things which appear to him most evident, as *Des-Cartes* has proposed, it will follow that *God* must be a Deceiver; which no Man fearing *God*, and in his right Senses, will ever say; much less a Man of your Understanding. For *God* is (a) full of Truth; he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; he enlightens every Man that comes into the World; so far is he from forming Man so as to be always deceived.

(a) Joh. i. 14. & xiv. 6. & i. 9.



C H A P. VII.

Seventh Objection, that this Law of doubting seems to hinder Submission to Faith, and to favour the Corruption of Manners.

IN short; this Method of doubting, Suspension of Judgment, and withholding Assent; this Method, I say, which you believe so proper to subject our Minds to *Faith*, seems to me on the contrary to withhold them from it. For what is more repugnant to such Submission, than not to give Credit to Things most evident? Will he whose Mind is habituated by long Exercise, to resist the Testimony of Sense, and the Force of Reason, willingly submit to the *Mysteries of Faith*, which are obscure in their Nature, and borrow no Assistance from the Senses, nor Reason?

Tertullian (a) spoke of this with great Wisdom: *What dost thou mean, rash*

(a) *Tertull. de Anim. Cap. 7.*

Academick, thou dost overthrow the whole State of Life; disturb the whole Order of Nature; render the Providence of God blind, who to make his Works intelligible, useful; and to dispense and give us the Enjoyment of them, has made all (if what thou sayest be admitted) depend on Senses, which are Impostors and Lyars. He says moreover; we are not allowed even to doubt of the Fidelity of the Senses, lest we doubt likewise of what has Respect to Christ, and say perhaps that he did not truly and really see Satan fall from Heaven, or not truly hear the Voice of the Father's Testimony from thence. St. Augustine (b) spoke with no less Wisdom, in saying: if you take away Assent, you take away Faith; because we believe Nothing without Assent. And speaking in another Place of the Academicks, to whom all Things were uncertain: The City of God, says he, detests such a Method of doubting, as an Extravagance, having Knowledge of Things comprehended by the Understanding and Reason, which is called Science, small it is true (because the Body

(b) Augustin. Enchirid. ad Laurent. Cap. 20. & de Civit. Dei lib. xix. Cap. 18.

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weighs down the Soul) but notwithstanding very certain: as the Apostle says, we know in Part; and the City of God yields Faith to the Senses, in the Evidence of every Thing which the Understanding makes Use of by the Information of the Body: and those who do not believe we must ever trust to them, deceive themselves in a much more pitiable Manner.

It was certainly with much Justice, that the Fathers of the Church took upon them the Defence of Reason against the *Academicks*. For if we will not hearken to Reason, this Foundation, *that there is a God*, on which Reason bottoms the Christian Religion, will be destroyed. These first Principles known to us by natural Light, and on which *Faith* depends, will become uncertain; *viz.* one and the same Thing cannot Be, and Not be at the same Time; neither can a Thing be at one and the same Time, that, and another; the same Proposition cannot at once be true and false, believed and not believed.

All *Theological* Conclusions will be likewise uncertain, if the two Propositions from whence they are drawn, are not certain with divine Certainty: For
if

if one of the two is not certain but of human Certainty, and known only by the Light of Nature, the Conclusion which according to the Doctrine of the Schools, always follows the weakest of two Propositions, will not be certain but with human Certainty. Let us, for Example, take this Conclusion: *Jesus Christ* is a rational Animal, which is deduced from these two Propositions, every Man is a rational Animal, *Jesus Christ* is a Man. The first of these Propositions is not certain but by human Certainty. The last by divine.

The Motives of Credibility, which propose to us the *Mysteries* of *Faith* as credible, will likewise lose their Force and Efficacy: for if they appear not credible to the Mind with Certainty and Evidence, but only with Probability, the Will will be carried towards a Thing unknown, and the Understanding believe with Imprudence, and not without some Apprehension of Error. *Faith* being thus unsettled, will be followed by Corruption of Manners: For whoever shall believe there is Nothing true nor false, will likewise think there is Nothing good nor evil. And this is what the *Scepticks* have not been ashamed to say. How can a Mind prepossessed

fed with such an Error refrain from Licentiousness? And these were perhaps the principal Reasons, which obliged the *Christians* absolutely to reject the Sect of *Pyrrhonians*; as being destructive to *Faith*, and an Enemy to good Manners. This also obliged the great Defender of *Truth* and *Piety*, St. *Augustine*, whose Testimony has been lately cited, to oppose the *Academicks* when a *Christian*, whose Sentiments he embraced being a *Pagan*. You are now to extricate your self out of all these Difficulties, which to me seem not to be easily solved.



C H A P. VIII.

The Objections of our Adversaries answered.

FOR my Part, said our *Provincial*, I find not these Difficulties to be of so much Perplexity, as they appear to you. But before I undertake to answer, you must know that it is one of the Advantages our *Philosophy* has above all other, to be strongly guarded by Objections, which destroy the rest. For this

this shews the Obscurity of Things, the Weakness of Men's Judgment, and the equal Weight of contrary Reasons : since even what we propose with Hesitation and Uncertainty, is not out of the Reach of Contradiction, in so much that we cannot know, nor be ignorant of any Thing with Assurance.

You must understand likewise, that you are not to hope for more from your Objections, than those who having attacked the *Academicks*, and *Scepticks*, by infinite Disputes, at last acknowledged, they gained Nothing by it. For we learn from *Plutarch* (a), that this Doctrine, after it had been vigorously opposed by excellent *Philosophers* and infinite Volumes, was not discouraged, and stood its Ground. That you may experience the same your self, your Objections must be examined.

(a) Plutarch. contr. Colot.





C H A P. IX.

Answer to the first Objection.

YOU say in the first Place we deprive Man of his Senses, draw a Vail over his Understanding, confound *Truth* and Falshood, and therefore subvert the whole Use of Life. This is an antiquated and threadbare Complaint, and has been often refuted by the ancient *Academicks* and *Scepticks*, who answered, as I have already informed you, that it is one Thing to live, another to *Philosophize*.

In the Conduct of Life, and the Discharge of our Duties, we cease to be *Philosophers*, to contradict, to be dubious and uncertain; we are easy, simple, credulous; call Things by their Names: Look to our Morals, and check our Understanding; conform to the Manners, Customs, and Laws of Men. I who doubt sometimes whether I am, whether there are any other Men, banish all these Thoughts at present; and

as being assured that I am, and that other Men are, I eat, drink, walk, visit, salute, entertain my Friends, affirm, deny, assure that this is true, and that false. For, as *Cicero* says, (a) *There is a great Difference between the Subtilty with which we seek Truth in Dispute; and that whereby we adjust our Discourse to the common Opinion.*

But you will say to me, this makes against yourself; and that you are convinced by your own Experience, and the Use of the Certainty of Things whereof you doubted; and this Necessity reduces you from your Errors, and puts you in the right Way. But is it not common and customary, to make Use of several Things, and enjoy them as true, although we know very well they are dubious, or even absolutely false?

Astronomers have invented certain Descriptions of celestial Orbs, by them called *Systems*, and *Hypotheses*. Which they don't believe themselves, nor propose to others as true, and indeed cannot all be so: The *Hypothesis* of *Copernicus* is different from that of *Tycho*; and one destructive of the other. Each

(a) *Cicero*. *Offic. libr. ii.*

of them notwithstanding usefully employs his own *Hypothesis*, to explain the Motion of the Stars, and predict *Eclipses* of the Sun, and Moon. It is false to say the Earth is but a Point; and notwithstanding in the Use of Astronomy, and Projection of solar Quadrants, it is supposed as certain.

In what is called *Analysis*, we usually suppose that which we seek, and is unknown to us, as true and well known; and thereby come to the Discovery of the Thing sought for. How many provide against the Time of Age, to which they are not sure they shall ever arrive? A Traveller who is ignorant of the Road he is to take, does not for that Reason stand stock still in a cross Way, and go no further.



CHAP. X.

Answer to the second Objection.

BY your second Objection, you pretend that I extinguish the Light of *Science*, and in its Place substitute the Darkneſs of Ignorance. Have you No-
thing

thing else to say, but what has been objected a hundred Times over? I expected somewhat more new and refined. Against this superannuated Argument, I shall offer an Answer not invalid, given already, *viz.* that without any Reason you impute a Fault of *Nature* to us, if it be allowable to say *Nature* is capable of a Fault.

He who pronounced Man to be a Bubble, is he the Cause of Man's being a Bubble? If I say Man cannot look on the Sun, am I accountable for the Weakness of his Eyes? Hear *Seneca (a)*: *Truth lies profoundly hid, and we cannot complain of any Malignity of Nature, because Nothing is difficult to be discovered, but Things whose Discovery is of no other Advantage. All that can render us better and happier, is placed before, or near us, by Nature.* 'Tis without Reason then, that *Seneca (b)* in another Place complains of the *Philosophy* which teaches to doubt, as not affording any Light to guide our Understanding to *Truth*, but even as putting out its own Eyes.

(a) Senec. de Benef. libr. vii. Cap. i.
Epist. 88.

(b) Senec.

I answer; this *Philosophy* puts not out its own Eyes; but discovers your Blindness, who think your selves to be exceedingly clear-sighted. As he who says a Mole has no Eyes, does not put out the Mole's Eyes. If you are so well pleased with your vain Opinion, love to be flattered, and to seem to know what you do not, enjoy your Error; but give us Leave to be ignorant of what we are ignorant. For that Reason, we are not the more remiss in the Study of Knowledge; shall spare no Labour for good Learning: and while you cultivate the *Sciences* in a vain Hope of knowing *Truth*; we on the other Hand shall do so, to find what is most probable and most likely to be true.

Will you accuse of Laziness and Ignorance, those many excellent *Philosophers*, we have opposed to so great a Number of *Dogmatists*?

Certainly to do them Justice, we must acknowledge they were the Authors and Princes of the greatest Part of *Sciences*, and fine Arts. It was not for Fear of running into Ignorance, that empty *Philosophers* rejected the Sect of *Arcefilas*, *Carneades*, and *Pyrrho*; but of being compelled to acknowledge their own. Add to this, that adhering to no Sect,

Sect, and following Probability only, we are obliged to weigh the Arguments of opposite Sides, as the *Academicks* did: Which cannot be done without much Study and Learning. The *Dogmatists* on the contrary wholly apply themselves to know the Nature, Constitution, and Arguments of that Sect they embrace, without troubling themselves any further. This is what the greatest Part of the Professors of the Doctrine of *Aristotle* practise at this Day.

Having learned the Method of *Philosophy* taught in the Schools, and reduced it to Precepts proportionable to the Capacity of their Disciples, little concern themselves with what *Plato*, *Epicurus*, and *Zeno* thought. Do not give themselves even the Trouble of reading *Aristotle*; know not whether the Doctrine of the *Peripateticks* they profess, is truly that Doctrine or no. *Epicurus* himself satisfied with espousing the Principles of *Democritus*, despised not so many other *Sciences* he seemed to despise, but to hide his Ignorance; pretending they were useless for the Attainment of true Knowledge: although *Nausiphanes* in the mean Time who taught him his *Philosophy*, and had

been a Disciple of *Pyrrho*, was a very learned Man. And at length many *Academicks* and *Scepticks* arrived to a high Pitch of Erudition.

As for *Des-Cartes*, although he carefully studied the ancient *Philosophers*, and many of the modern, affected to appear as if he knew Nothing of them, to be thought the only Inventor of his Doctrine. In which Conduct, many of his Disciples followed him too closely; for they imitated his feigned, by real Ignorance. In the mean while these Defenders of Ignorance, these Enemies of Learning, which appears but too much by their Writings, cease not continually to repeat the same Objection against the *Academicks*, and to accuse them of profound Ignorance: Because, say they, by this Profession of knowing Nothing, they acknowledge themselves to be the most ignorant of all Men. As if in saying they knew Nothing, they owned that others knew more than they.

But these *Philosophers* of so much Circumspection, who in all their Works recommend it to us, should have been so attentive themselves, as to see that the Word *to know* is *equivocal*, and it
is

is one Thing to know with entire Evidence and perfect Certainty, another probably; that the *Academicks* perceive Things in this latter Manner, as all other Men do; but no-body in the former. They pretended that the *Academicks* affected to appear doubtful of all Things, and even of the most certain, to gain the publick Reputation of Men of Wit. It was to appear Men of Wit then; that the *Cartesians* and *Des-Cartes* before them, would have us in Order to know *Truth*, disengage our Minds from the Opinions they are prepossessed with, and which they call *Prejudices*. But it is easy to perceive both by this Reproach and all the rest, that they have not any Tincture of polite Learning, and indeed never knew the Sentiments of *Academicks* and *Scepticks*.



C H A P. XI.

Answer to the third Objection.

WE proceed to your third Objection, which is to make us believe we see what we do not, I would say

Truth from Falshood, by certain *Signs* that distinguish one from the other. It is really surprizing enough that you should know what I see, and I should not know it myself. There is an Appearance of *Truth* found in Things which we hold to. You infer from thence, that we have a *Rule* of discerning between *Truth* and *Falshood*, viz. this Appearance. But Appearance of *Truth* is no certain Indication of *Truth*, it is only a Thing external, and when perceived in some *Object*, we don't say *Truth* is there, because this Appearance is not always exempt from Falsity; only pronounce that Likelihood and Probability is there.

Zeuxis seeing a Curtain painted in a Piece of *Parrhasius*, deceived by the Likeness, believed it to be real; if after the Discovery of his Error, he had beheld a true Curtain drawn over the Piece, he would have doubted the *Truth* of that also, and believed it to be only an Appearance whether true or false, 'till he had examined the Matter a little nearer. So we having frequently been deceived by the Fallacy which is in Things, ought to conclude, if we are wise, that Probability is there, but not *Truth*; and that such Probability might arise from *Truth* or Falshood. This Appearance

pearance then, is so far from being a *Rule* to distinguish the one from the other, since we have experienced it to be common to both, that we resolve for the future, to abstain from thinking to discern *Truth* from Falshood, and from yielding our Belief and Assent to either.

But, say you, to perceive this Likelihood, we must have known the *Truth* before. For I cannot tell whether the Picture of *Peter* resembles *Peter*, if *Peter* was not known to me before. Now the Knowledge we have both of *Truth*, and of *Peter*, are equally uncertain: For we have not this Knowledge but by *Ideas*; and I have shewed you all along, that they are very uncertain Characters of the *Veracity* of Things. And because we have no Rule of *Truth*, to which we may apply our *Ideas*, the *Idea* of *Peter* which proceeded from *Peter*, is as uncertain, as that *Idea* I have formed of *Truth*; and I am no more assured of the Certainty of the one, than the other. Accordingly when I say that the Image of *Peter* is like *Peter*, that signifies the *Idea* I have of *Peter*'s Image, seems to me to resemble the *Idea* I have of *Peter*; so when I say the Appearance of *Truth* I find in an *Object* is

is likely, or like to *Truth*, I mean the *Idea* I have of that Appearance, seems to me to be like the *Idea* I have of *Truth*.

As to what you add, that if we know not *Truth*, we know Likelihood at least; because when we declare an Appearance of *Truth* is found in such and such a Thing, we know, and affirm it is so; and when we follow that Appearance or Resemblance of *Truth*, we give our Assent thereto; and therefore have no Reason to say that Man cannot comprehend, and ought not to affirm, nor believe any Thing: this is easily answered. For when I own I discover an Appearance of *Truth* in any Thing, I mean I have two *Ideas* imprinted in my Mind; namely the *Idea* of the Appearance of *Truth*, and the *Idea* of *Truth* it self, which being compared, appear to me to be alike. As when I see *Peter*, the *Idea* of *Peter* comes immediately into my Mind: and because I cannot compare the *Idea* of *Peter* with *Peter* himself, since *Peter* is not in my Mind, but only the *Idea* of him; the Origin of this *Idea* is entirely uncertain, as well as its Resemblance of the Thing it represents; and by which I shall never know with Certainty and Evidence, that *Peter* is there present. Nevertheless

less this seems to me to be probable, because on other Occasions, resembling *Ideas* have appeared to me to signify a Conformity, or Correspondence between them and the Things themselves.

Now *Truth* being Nothing else, as I have said, but the Relation and Agreement of the external *Object* with the Judgment of the Understanding, in View of the *Idea* proceeding from that *Object*: So Probability is Nothing else, but the Appearance of the Relation and Agreement of the external *Object*, with the Judgment which my Understanding forms in View of that *Idea*. When I apply my Understanding then to consider the *Idea* I have of *Peter*, methinks I perceive therein a certain Appearance of Relation, and Agreement with *Peter*. Afterwards I compare the *Idea* of that Appearance, with the *Idea* of *Peter*, and finding them to be alike, I conclude this Appearance is probable.

Then you'll say, we know at least that those *Ideas* are alike. No; for to *know*, is to know most surely and most evidently. But I do not know all the *Ideas* I have in my Understanding. Many Touches, many Traces are formed there
without

without my Privity, or thinking of them; a great Quantity of Spirits are convey'd to my Brain, a great Quantity retire from it; they are agitated in different Manners. From thence it is, that whether I will or no, I both retain, and forget an Infinity of Things; do not always perceive in me the same Strength of Wit and Apprehension; my Reason does not at all Times serve me alike, and by Consequence am not Master of the *Ideas* of Things, nor sufficiently instructed in the Nature of *Ideas*, their Causes, Origin, and Extinction; which hinders my knowing their Resemblances with full Assurance. Now I cannot assure with Certainty, what I know with no Certainty.

I believe I have effectually proved the Fidelity of the Brain to be dubious, and that we comprehend not the Nature of our Understanding. But there are Images in the Brain, namely those Traces which are imprinted in it by the Motion of the Spirits, and Nerves. From whence the Understanding forms *Ideas*, compares them one with another, and discovers the Resemblances that are between them. What certain and indubitable Knowledge then can I draw from Instruments of such doubtful Credit?

dit? What can I affirm, without sure and constant Perception? When an *Academick* then says there is no *Truth*, that all is uncertain, and we know Nothing, he advances not these Propositions affirmatively, but narratively. And here the Exception of *Carneades*, and the *Scepticks*, which I have already alledged, ought to take Place, namely, that these Propositions include themselves; and when any one says we can know Nothing, he does not except even what he says, and in destroying the Knowledge of all other, he destroys his own: like *Sampson* when he involved himself in the same Ruin which crushed all his Spectators.

The Objection of *Aristocles* (a) does not affect us, when he says that if these Propositions, by which we destroy other, are uncertain, and destroy themselves, it is to no Purpose to use them, for they prove Nothing. I answer they are to Purpose, and we use them not in vain, if they do destroy other Propositions by destroying themselves: for it is purely for this End we employ them, and not to establish and support them.

(a) Aristocl. apud Euseb. Præf. libr. xiv. Cap. 18.



C H A P. XII.

Answer to the fourth Objection.

WE are not much concerned, that you refuse our Doctrine the Title of Sect, and of *Philosophy*; for provided the Thing be manifest, we shall not trouble our selves with Names. Call it not a Sect, but the Gleanings of all Sects; call it (a) *the Philosophy of not philosophizing*, as some have done, and you have my Consent. We should usurp the Title of Sect with a very ill Grace, which we refuse to others, since we know *Truth* no better than they, whose Ignorance makes us refuse them this Title.

We readily grant that *Arcefilas* is stab'd by the same Weapon, with which he wounds all other *Philosophers*, as *Lactantius* (b) objects to him. The *Dogmatick* and *Aporetick*, i. e. both the affirmative *Philosophy*, and that which teaches to doubt, are liable to the same

(a) Lactant. libr. iii. Cap. 5. (b) Lactant. libr. iii. Cap. 5.
Fate.

Fate. But we have this Advantage above them, *viz.* they know not that they know Nothing, and we do know it, although uncertainly and dubiously. Moreover they dispute not the Likelihood we follow; and we deny them the *Truth* which they seek.

Since our Views then go farther than theirs, and we have our own and their Suffrage too, we better deserve that illustrious Name of *Philosophers*, and have more right to the Title of Sect than they. Besides, they are subject to be deceived, which is unworthy of Persons who call themselves *Philosophers*: but we who affirm Nothing, and suspend our Judgment in all, while we remain in this State, are not, neither can be deceived.

Which then will merit the Name of Sect, their Doctrine or ours? Will uncertain Positions taken for true, and Consequences drawn from them which have no more *Truth*, placed in Order of a *System*, and maintained and adhered to with Obstinacy; or that which embracing no Opinions, neither affirming nor denying, is satisfied to propose what appears to be probable, gives for Likelihood what is Likelihood, and forms it into a Kind of Connexion? Who are best and safest lodged, those who
should

should build a lofty House of weak and almost broken Reeds, and dwell in it? Or they who having experienced the Danger of such Materials, and not finding any more solid, fearful of being buried under the Ruins of such a Fabrick, should chuse a natural Cavern in the Bottom of a Rock for their Retreat, and there securely stow their Goods and Provisions?

Even these Probabilities which we follow, may be very well ranged in the Form, and composed of all the Parts of a *System*, and put in a Condition to defend itself against all the Attacks of the *Dogmatists*. Witness *Sextus Empiricus*, who has left us an exact Description of this modest Doctrine of the *Scepticks*, consisting of all its Parts, well compacted and united together. Time has consumed many other Works which shewed what *Sextus* did.





C H A P. XIII.

The fifth Objection answered.

WE shall easily deliver our selves likewise out of those Snares you lay for us, and think to be inextricable, viz. when you reason thus: If when we maintain there is Nothing true nor false, we speak Truth, it follows there is some *Truth*, and therefore we are deceived. If in saying there is Nothing true nor false, we do not speak Truth, it follows we are deceived no less, in advancing what is false. This Argument is the same you have already objected to us, that when I say we can neither comprehend nor safely affirm any Thing, I comprehend and affirm that at least. We must then recur to the former Answer; namely, that when I say there is Nothing true nor false, that Proposition includes itself, and is not excepted from this general Law which pronounces, that there is Nothing true nor false.

P

You

You will see the Validity of this Argument better if it be reduced into Form. Thus then you object to us *Syllogistically*, viz. When we say there is Nothing true nor false, what we pronounce is true or false. If true, then we have asserted what is false, in saying Nothing is true nor false: if we assert what is false, in saying there is Nothing true nor false; this Proposition which we have advanced is then false, viz. that there is Nothing true nor false. From whence it follows, that whether we have spoke what is true or false, by advancing this Proposition that there is nothing true nor false, this Proposition is certainly false.

In Answer to this, I don't agree to your *Major*, which is; when we say there is Nothing true nor false, in saying so, what we speak is either true or false: Now this is a plain begging of the Question, to use the Terms of *Logicians*; since you take the Thing which is in Question for certain and granted, in supposing that there is no Proposition which is not true or false; for we affirm that there is nothing true nor false; your Reasoning then being bottomed on a Proposition uncertain and dubious, the Conclusion you draw from it, is null and void.

void. There is an Example of a like Argument in the Schools called *Affstates*, that is to say, which cannot subsist. They suppose a Man has dreamt that he must not believe Dreams; and see how they reason on it; if this Man believes this Dream, he will at the same Time believe, and not believe in Dreams: He will believe in Dreams, since he believes in this Dream: he will not believe in Dreams, since he believes in the Dream which forbids him to believe in Dreams. But if this Man believes not this Dream, he will at the same Time still believe, and not believe, in Dreams: he will believe in Dreams, since he will obey the Precept of this Dream, which forbids him to believe in Dreams; he will not believe in Dreams, since he believes not in the Dream which warns him not to believe in Dreams. These Propositions seem to contradict and destroy each other; but the Solution is the same as that of the former: For this Dream depriving other Dreams of Belief, deprives it self of Belief also. This Dreamer then will not refuse his Belief to other Dreams, because he believes this; but being only cautioned, and not convinced by it, he will hold all Dreams to be false, and this as well as the rest.

Of the WEAKNESS *of*

We shall be at as little Trouble to refute what you have advanced as a Demonstration. The Proofs, say you, which we bring to shew there is no such Thing as Demonstration, either prove or do not prove it: if they do prove it, then there are Demonstrations, since a Proof made by Reason is a Demonstration: if they do not prove it, then there are Demonstrations, since the Proofs you have produced to shew that there is no Demonstration, do not prove it.

In Answer to this Reasoning, I say, you still suppose as true and granted that which is in Dispute; Namely, that all Argumentation, *i. e.* all Proofs which are made by Reason, either prove or do not prove. When I undertake to prove there is no Demonstration, the Proof made use of comprehends it self with all the other Proofs, and destroys its own Force. Then, you will say, if this Proof be vain, and of no Effect, it follows that there are Demonstrations, because the Proof brought to shew that there are none, is invalid. I own it is not true, because Nothing is constantly so: I own it concludes Nothing certainly, because there is Nothing incontestably certain, I say it is only probable: and what is but probable, concludes
No-

Nothing with Certainty; which Certainty is nevertheless necessary to a Demonstration.

That other Argument the *Epicureans* object to us is a meer Jest, when they say we either know what Demonstration is, or know it not; if we know it, it follows that there are Demonstrations; if we know it not, we are very ill advised to make Opposition to a Thing of which we are utterly ignorant.

In answer to this, I say it proves too much; and therefore proves Nothing. It proves too much, because it may be employed against all who deny that some particular Thing exists; as for Instance, against those who shall say there is no *Hippogryphin*. For the *Epicureans* will answer them that they know what a *Hippogryphin* is, or do not know it: if they know it, by Consequence there are *Hippogryphins*; if they do not know it, they are illadvised to oppose a Thing which we know not. There are neither Demonstrations nor *Hippogryphins*, but we may form *Ideas* of Things that do not exist, and reason upon them as if they did.



C H A P. XIV.

Answer to the sixth Objection.

YOU say next that if *God* has made us so, as to be always deceived even in Things which seem to be most clear, we shall be compelled to own that *God* is a Deceiver; which cannot be asserted nor thought, without the greatest Impiety. To this Objection *Des-Cartes* should answer, who was the Author of this Way of Reasoning, which I have related without any Approbation: For our holy *Religion* teaches us otherwise. But imagine you are to talk with *Des-Cartes* on this Head: he will not fail to say, that if *God* has made us of such a Nature as to be always deceived, we must not argue from thence he is, or was a Deceiver. For since he has created us so, as to be sometimes deceived, and in the mean Time we cannot therefore call him a Deceiver, we have no more Reason to call him so, if we should always, and in every Thing be deceived.

More-

Moreover, if *God* made us of such a Nature as to be always deceived, that would not be sufficient to authorize us to say *God* is a Deceiver; but to do so, it must be proved he has made us in such sort, that besides being always deceived, we should certainly believe we are not always deceived. As we cannot accuse him of being a Liar who recites Fables, but the Teller of Stories, who would persuade the Hearers he speaks Truth. As we cannot accuse a Man of being a Cheat, who sells a House built of rotten and ruinous Materials, but one who selling a Tenement in a wretched Condition, should assure it to be sound and firm. On the Contrary, we shall esteem his Honesty, who in selling this House discovered its Faults.

Such is *God's* Conduct towards Men. He has given us to understand, that our Senses are faithless, our Reason deceitful, our Understanding weak, our Perceptions obscure and uncertain. Has informed us of this by the *Oracles* of his Word, as I have shewed; by the very Nature of our Senses, Reason, and Experience. For finding we are frequently deceived we should think we may be deceived always, or if it happens sometimes we are not deceived, for ought we know we are deceived then. Wherein *God*

informs us he is *full of Truth*, and *Truth* itself, that we are subject to Error, and often do err, solliciting us by internal and continual Exhortations not to look for certain Knowledge of *Truth*, from the Senses and Reason, but from him by *Faith*.

But farther, it is more to our Advantage to be deprived of the Knowledge of *Truth*, than to have an open and easy Access to it: For being well apprized, that we cannot know *Truth* with intire Certainty, and perfect Evidence, we must suspend our Judgment, and so be never deceived. Thus *Des-Cartes* may defend himself against your Attack. But that is his Business: We are not answerable for these Opinions.



C H A P. XV.

Answer to the seventh Objection.

YOU conclude with this important Objection, that by suspending our Judgment and Assent, we deviate from the Submission due to *Faith*, and give an Inlet to Corruption of Manners. Now
we

we are not destitute of Means to reconcile *Faith* and Reason, and the former has Nothing to fear from the latter: For Reason has its Light, though weak and obscure; but can derive from that Light no more than from the Senses and Nature, all Assistances necessary to acquire a sure and consummate Knowledge of *Truth*. For as to those Notices we have from the divine Light, which illuminates our Understanding above the Laws of Nature, we ought to submit to it without Reluctancy. And having received the *Faith*, are obliged to regulate our Morals according to its Precepts. But without this holy Rule, we have Laws and Customs, which may serve us for the Conduct of Life.

As to that warm Expression of *Tertullian* (a) in Favour of the Senses, that by neglecting their Testimony, we subvert the State of Life, disturb the Oeconomy of Nature, and put out the Eyes of God's Providence: These are old Complaints of the *Dogmatists* to which I have sufficiently answered, by all that has been lately said: And doubtless he ought not to have drawn his Proof from the Humanity of *Jesus Christ*, which

(a) Tertull. de Anim. Cap. 7.

was joined to the Divinity, and no less exempt from Error than Sin. As to the *Apostles*, and other Saints, whose Words and Actions concurred to the Propagation of the *Faith*, God preserved in them all the Fidelity, and Certainty of Reason, and Senses, that human Nature is capable of; and defended them from Error by the Assistance of his *Grace*.

I own with *Saint Augustine* (a), that without Assent there is no *Faith*: But the Assent which *Faith* requires, differs in Kind, from what is required by Reason. He banishes Doubt from the *City of God*, and justly; if those Doubts intermeddle with, and make an Attempt on Things of Faith. He affirms we may acquire the most certain *Science* by Reason: I own it, but this *Science* will be most certain no farther than human Certainty extends, and *Saint Augustine* acknowledges that this human Certainty is weak and imperfect; that human Understanding plunged in the Pollutions of the Flesh, and involved in the Darkness of Ignorance, sees but obscurely, and cannot look upon the Light of *Truth*. Let us pass to your other Objections.

(a) Augustin. Enchir. ad Laurent. Cap. 20. & de Civitat. Dei. lib. xix. Cap. 18.

If we hearken not to Reason, say you, you overthrow that great Foundation of Religion, which Reason has established in our Understanding, viz. *God is*. To answer this Objection, you must be told that Men know *God* in two Manners. By Reason, with entire human Certainty: and by *Faith*, with absolute and divine Certainty. Although by Reason we cannot acquire any Knowledge more certain than that of the *Being* of *God*; infomuch that all the Arguments, which the Impious oppose to this Knowledge are of no Validity, and easily refuted, nevertheless this Certainty is not absolutely perfect.

For whence it was that the *Fathers* of the *Church* would hardly believe, that he could know *God* who knew him by Reason only, and not by *Faith*; and accounted that Knowledge of *God* which we have by Reason, almost as Nothing. For what do these Words of *Tertullian* (a) which I have already cited, signify: *To whom is God known without Christ? To whom is the holy Spirit given without the Sacrament of Faith?* What does St. *Athanasius* mean, (b) when he teaches us that the *Being* of a *Divinity* is not proved by Ratio-

(a) Tertull. De Anim. Cap. 2.
pion.

(b) Athanas. ad Sera-

cination,

Of the WEAKNESS of

cination, but by the Help of *Faith* and holy Meditations, which are conceived by Piety? How is St. *Chrysostome* to be understood, (c) when he laughs at *Philosophers* who would not believe the World was made of Nothing, and yet readily granted that *God* had no Beginning, and was not begotten, though the former be much less credible, and we know neither one nor the other by Reason, but by *Faith*?

What Answer would you make to *Peter* of *Ailly*, (d) when he speaks thus: *Although this Proposition, God is, may be inevident, and cannot be demonstrated evidently, it is nevertheless naturally probable.* Witness the Testimony alledged by *Gabriel Biel*, (e) when he declares that *we know sufficiently, though not evidently, that there must be a first Being, Author of Preservation, as there is a first Being, Author of Production.* What does St. *Thomas* say (f) when he argues thus: *Human Reason is very defective in human Things. And what shews it, is, that Philosophers who following Nature, applied themselves to the Search of such Things, have been*

(c) Chrysost. Hom. 22. in Epist. ad. Ebr. (d) Petr. de Alliaco in 1. Quæst. 3. Lit. x. (e) Biel. in 1. Dist. 2. Quæst. 10. Art. 3. Dub. 1. (f) Thom. 2. 2. Q. 2. A. 4.

frequently deceived, and contradicted each other. To the Intent then that Men might have a certain and undoubted Knowledge of God, it was necessary Things divine should be taught them as Articles of Faith, and the Words of a God who cannot lie.

Now although to prove the Existence of the Deity, we can bring Arguments which accumulated and connected together, are not of less Power to convince Men than Geometrical Principles, and Theorems deduced from them, and which are of entire human Certainty; notwithstanding because learned Philosophers have openly opposed even these Principles, 'tis clear we cannot neither in the natural Knowledge we have of God, which is acquired by Reason, nor in Science founded on Geometrical Principles, and Theorems, find absolute and consummate Certainty; but only that human Certainty I have spoke of, to which nevertheless every wise Man ought to submit his Understanding. This being not repugnant to the Testimony of the Book of *Wisdom* (g), and the Epistle (h) to the *Romans*, which declares that Men

(g) Sap. xiii. & seq.

(h) Rom. i. 20.

who do not from the Make of the World acknowledge the Power and Divinity of the *Maker*, are senseless and inexcusable.

For to use the Terms of *Vasquez*:
(i) By these Words the holy Scripture means only, that there has ever been a sufficient Testimony of the Being of a God in the Fabrick of the World, and in his other Works, to make him known unto Men: but the Scripture is not under any Concern whether this Knowledge be evident, or of greatest Probability: for these Terms, are seen and understood, in their common and usual Acceptation, signify all the Knowledge of the Mind with a determined Assent. He adds after: For if any one should at this Time deny Christ, that which would render him inexcusable, would not be because he might have had an evident Knowledge and Reason for believing in him, but because he might have believed it by Faith, and a prudential Knowledge.

'Tis with Reason then that *Suarez*,
(k) teaches, that the natural Evidence

(i) Vasq. in Thom. 1 Part. Sect. 6.

(k) Suar. Disp. iii. de Fid.

of this Principle, God is the first Truth, who cannot be deceived, is not necessary, nor sufficient enough to make us believe by infused Faith, what God reveals. He proves by the Testimony of Experience, that it is not necessary; for ignorant and illiterate Christians, although they know Nothing clearly and certainly of God, do believe nevertheless that God is. Even Christians of Parts and Learning, as St. Thomas (l) has observed, believe that God is, before they know it by Reason. Suarez shews afterwards, that the natural Evidence of this Principle is not sufficient, because divine Faith which is infused into our Understanding, cannot be bottomed upon human Faith alone, how clear and firm soever it is, as upon a formal Object, because an Assent most firm, and of an Order most noble and exalted, cannot derive its Certainty from a more infirm Assent.

St. Thomas (m) and other Divines are of the same Opinion, not only touching Theological Virtues, but moral no less, infused of God, which cannot be directed according to their Dig-

(l) Thom. 2. 2. Q. 2. A. 4. & 5. (m) Thom. 2. 2. Q. 2. A. 4. & 1. 2. Q. 63. A. 3. A. 3. in Corp. & ad 3. um.

nity by natural Reason. We are not to imagine this is destroyed by that Sentence of St. Paul; (n) *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is*: believe it, not by natural *Faith*, but by *Faith* infused of God: for immediately before he says, *without Faith it is impossible to please God*. Thus the Fathers of the Council of Trent explained it (o): As to that Proposition of St. Thomas, *we believe God, or the Being of God, and in God by one and the same Act*, it teaches us that the divine *Faith* by which we believe that God is, comes from God himself, and not from Nature and human Reason: For, as Suarez says the *Excellence of the first Truth deserves, that when the material Object is resolved into the formal, this same formal Object is not resolved into another, but believed by itself, because it can give Testimony of itself*.

As to what you have added, that in the Event, *Faith* will depend on Things uncertain, if first Principles which are known by the Light of Nature are uncertain; as this for Instance, one and the same Thing cannot Be, and Not be

(n) Ebr. xi. 6.

(o) Concil. Trid. Sess. vi. Cap. 6.

at the same Time, Suarez (a) has given an excellent Answer to it: *If some first Principle be found necessarily involved in the Assent of Faith, it will be believed also by Faith, and Faith depends not on this Principle as naturally known. For Example, If I believe God in a Trinity of Persons, I necessarily believe he is not one in Person, and that he has not four Persons: not because of this natural Principle, every Thing is, or not, so far as it is natural: but because Faith itself, which makes it be believed that the Affirmation is true, makes it be believed that the Negative is false. And so of the like.*

Faith depends not on these first Principles, but supposes them, as certain, in that supreme human Certainty I have mentioned; joining itself to which, of certain they were by supreme human Certainty, they become so by divine Certainty: as I have proved seemingly to your Satisfaction. From whence you might easily know, that while human Understanding trusting to Reason, bottoms on these first Principles, it can scarcely support itself; but as soon as *Faith* comes into its Aid, it remains

(a) Suar. Disp. vi. de Fide, Sect. 3. Art. 13.

Of the WEAKNESS of

firm and impregnable. Reflect on that *Axiom* so common, and approved of by the unanimous Consent of all the ancient *Philosophy*, *out of Nothing Nothing can be produced*. *Plato* building on this Foundation as most solid, and immoveable, believed the World was formed of Matter eternally pre-existent. *Aristotle* that it had no Beginning. This Principle has been rejected by *Faith*. Why may not the same befall other *Axioms* by the Power of *God*? Was not *Des-Cartes* of Opinion that by that Power, one and the same Thing might be, and not be, one and the same Proposition might be true and false at the same Time? From whence it manifestly follows, that when Reason applies itself to first Principles, although it finds in them a supreme human Certainty, nevertheless there is somewhat wanting to them, to their being certain with perfect Certainty; and this Defect is supplied by *Faith*.

Not only these *Axioms*, and first Principles, but likewise other Propositions of less Extent, and not so easily believed by human Understanding, derive their Validity and Certainty from *Faith*. Many Instances of which we find in holy Scriptures, in the Councils, and De-

crees

crees of the Church: as for Example; that Proposition you have advanced, namely *Jesus Christ* is a rational Animal, not only acquires its Certainty by the Argument you have proposed, and by Reason, but by *Faith* also. These Propositions likewise become certain to me by *Faith*, viz. Man is composed of Body and Soul, is endowed with Sense and Life; I am and I live, because I believe; and know I believe. These Propositions that I find to be certain by Reason and human Certainty, when *Faith* supervenes, become certain by a divine Certainty; and all those Obscurities which possessed my Mind, vanish. 'Tis truly a great Advantage we derive from *Faith* and *Theology* among many other, that our staggering Understanding is thereby conducted to a full, clear, and certain Knowledge of *Truth*.

You may insist, and say the Form call'd *Syllogistical*, is not a Retainer to *Faith*; and that in this Form, there can be no other but human Certainty, and yet notwithstanding the Certainty of the Conclusion depends on this Form; and if this Conclusion appertains to *Faith*, this Conclusion so appertaining to *Faith*, will have no other than human Certainty.

Q 2

But

But you must know that the Certainty of this Conclusion that appertains to *Faith*, depends not on the Certainty of the *Syllogistick* Form, which in Respect to it, to speak in the Terms of the *School*, is purely accidental. For Divines, and principally *St. Thomas Aquinas* (a), teach that *divine Science is not discursive, or ratiocinative, but absolute and simple*; and the Understanding carried by one and the same Act towards the material Object, by Reason of the formal; and that by one and the same Act, we believe in God, and believe *God is*; as *Faith* entring into our Understanding, causes both itself, and the Things it proposes, to be received and believed. As Light renders other Things, and itself visible.

For this Reason, *Saint Chrysostom* (b), whose Testimony I have already alledged, says very pertinently, that Things obscure, are made visible by *Faith*; and those that are visible, confirmed and made certain by those which are invisible; and that *Faith* cannot support itself, if it does not convince us more certainly of Things which are not visible,

(a) Thon. 22. Q. 1. A. 1.
2 Homil. 21.

(b) Chrysost. in Ebr. xi.

than we are convinced of Things that are so.

As touching the Motives of Credibility, which preparing the Mind to receive *Faith*, ought according to you to be not only certain by supreme and human Certainty, but by supreme and absolute Certainty; I will oppose *Gabriel Biel* (c) to you, who pronounces that to receive *Faith*, 'tis sufficient that the Motives of Credibility be proposed as probable. Do you believe that Children, illiterate, gross, ignorant People, who have scarcely the Use of Reason, and notwithstanding have received the Gift of *Faith*, do most clearly, and most stedfastly conceive those forementioned Motives of Credibility? No; without Doubt; but the *Grace* of *God* comes into their Assistance, and sustains the Imbecility of Nature and Reason.

This is the common Opinion of Divines. Reason has Need of the Aid of divine *Grace*, not only in gross, illiterate Persons, but even in those of Parts and Learning; for how clear-sighted soever that may be, yet it cannot make us have *Faith*, if Celestial Light does not illuminate us within; because as I have

(c) Biel in iii. Disp. 24. Art. 3. Dub. 1.

said already, divine *Faith* being of a superior Order, cannot derive its Efficacy from human *Faith*. Upon which Account, the Church has condemned the *Semi-Pelagians*, for believing the Commencement of *Faith* to come from ourselves, and not from God. And this gave Occasion to that Decree of the Council of Orange (a): *If any one affirms, that without the Illumination and Inspiration of the holy Spirit, by the meer Strength of Nature, he can think, act, chuse aright, or consent to the Preaching he hears concerning any good Thing, which has Respect to Salvation, he is deceived by a Spirit of Heresy.*

With this agrees that Decree of the Council of Trent: (b) *If any one says, that without the Inspiration of the holy Spirit, and its Assistance preventing, Man can believe in such Manner as to have the Grace of Justification confer'd on him, let him be accursed.* This is likewise the Doctrine of Saint Thomas Aquinas (c): *The Light of Faith makes Things seen that are believed.* He says moreover, *Believers have Knowledge of the Things of Faith, not in a demonstra-*

(a) Concil. Araus. Cap. 7. (b) Concil. Trid. Sess. vi. Can. 3. (c) Thom. 2. 2. Q. 1. A. 4. ad 3. & A. 5. ad 1.

tive Way, but so as by the Light of Faith, it appears to them that they ought to be believed.



C H A P. XVI.

Why the Doctrine of the Academicks and Scepticks was rejected.

AS to what remains, the Causes of rejecting the *Pyrrhonian* Doctrine were not as you suppose. You think it was rejected by the *Pagans* lest *Sciences* should fall into Contempt; though I have made it appear to you, that they were diligently cultivated by excellent Men, who practised the *Art* of *doubting*. You believe it to be rejected by the *Christians*, lest it should be injurious to *Faith*, and good *Morals*; although in the Time of *Cicero*, we own either it totally fell, as he frequently says; or rather to speak more accurately, was reduced to a few Hands. The *Christians*, who did not then appear in the World, could not fear any Thing, in Respect to their Religion or *Morals*, from the *Scepticks*. But the

Of the WEAKNESS of

Rejection of it is rather to be ascribed to the Pride which is natural to Man: for being puffed up and swelled with this *Opinion*, that his *Reason* renders him superior to all other Animals, that he is endowed with Understanding capable of *Sciences*, born to reason, to conceive, to know, he is angry to see himself stripped of all these Advantages, and in some sort degraded, and condemned to the Darkness of perpetual Ignorance.

He cannot then bear to be awakened out of so agreeable a Dream, and prefers an honourable Folly, to poor and obscure Wisdom. And that he may not see himself ejected by the *Scepticks* out of this ancient Possession of Science, as out of a rich Inheritance he holds of Nature, is better satisfied to oppose them Sword in Hand, and by Violence, as the Ravishers of Reason, and Destroyers of *Science*, than act against them by legal Methods; foreseeing that otherwise he must be deprived of that which without any Right he had usurped.

You see by this Time, if I am not mistaken, how weak and frivolous all the Objections of the *Dogmatists* are. They might notwithstanding affect me, if
among

among *Philosophers* there was ever a Sect exempt from Contradictions; or if any *Philosopher* approved a Doctrine different from his own. But since there was continual War between them, we are not to expect they should keep the Peace with us. And seeing we make Profession of contradicting all other, we must not, to be equitable, take it ill, that many should contradict us. As our Objections cannot convince them of their Error, and they refuse to yield to our Remonstrances, it is but just they should give us leave to be free from any Surprize by their Reproaches.

That learned Sect of the *Pythagoreans*, which arrived to such prodigious Eru-
dition, having first been harras'd with infinite Calumnies and Ralleries, was at length absolutely silenced: whether be-
cause *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Speusippus*, and others besides, plundered and appropriated the best Discoveries of theirs to themselves, and after they had retrenched and reformed what they pleased, separated and collected whatever could contribute to Rallery, and give Occasion thereby to Jesters to turn that Sect into Ridicule, as *Porphyrus* (a) has

(a) Porpyr. Vit. Pyth.

conjectured: or whether according to the Surmises of *Jamblichus* (b), certain little supposititious Books, and strange and odious Symbols attributed to that Sect, procured it so much Contradiction: in the mean Time, the Contempt it fell under, did not hinder neither *Jamblichus* I have now mentioned, nor many others from remaining constant Adherers to the Party, and from boasting that they had the divine Protection, on which they relied.

How great Injuries were done to the *Epicureans*, as having attacked the Gods, subverted Religion, corrupted Manners, extinguished Shame, and authorized Libertinism? They became so infamous, that the *Jews* of this latter Age make Use of the Name *Epicure*, to express Arrogance, Impurity, and the very Sinks of Debauchery. We have seen nevertheless in our Days, a *Gassendi*, bearing the Character of a *Priest*, and who merited, and had the Approbation of many learned and pious Persons, make this Sect revive, though abolished for so many Years. *Des-Cartes* himself, who endeavour'd to demonstrate the *Existence* of a God, and the

(b) Jambl. Vit. Pyth. libr. 1. Cap. i.

Distinction of the *Soul* and *Body*, was not exempt from Censure; and nevertheless we see many Persons, both grave and learned, of all Conditions, embrace and defend his Sentiments.



C H A P. XVII.

Conclusion.

THINGS being as I have now represented them, we cannot promise our selves to be more favourably treated by the Vulgar of the Republick of Learning; but the Suspicions and Complaints formed against us, will never prevail to make us relinquish our Design, of following what shall appear to be probable, 'till we are influenced by greater Probability. In the mean while, Nothing will induce us to grant that we know what we do not know, and shall always prefer the Liberty of our own Judgment, to the Approbation of those who are prepossessed with their vain *Ideas*.

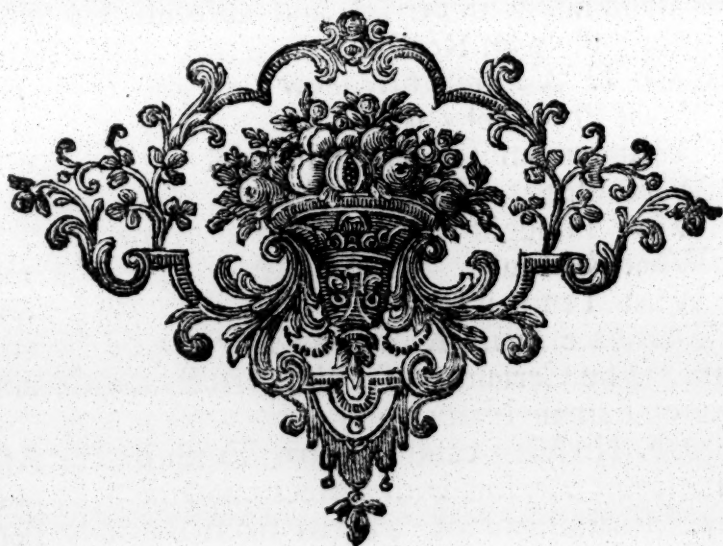
Your's, said that excellent Man, full of Civility and Candour, shall with me
be

be ever of great Weight, to confirm me in these Thoughts: and I greatly wish it may be in my Power to merit it. Certainly this free and disinterested Method of *Philosophizing* you profess, which runs through all *Sciences*, without being a Bigot to any, sufficiently shews you have some Respect, or at least that you have not much Aversion for our Party. If you are of another Opinion, I shall not oppose it, and don't pretend you should give up that *philosophical* Liberty, which I so carefully reserve to my self.

I own, said I to him, you have moved me; but it is an Affair that well deserves to be examined, and thoroughly inspected at Leisure. And if other Considerations make me relinquish your Doctrine, although in Point of *Philosophy* we ought to have little Deference for Authority, your's nevertheless would incline me to embrace it. I had rather, he answered, you would do so by Amity than Deference, lest a Diversity of Opinions should any way invalidate the strict Alliance, and Uniformity of Life and Studies which is between us.

Such

Such was the Conversation I had with this able *Philosopher*, neither frivolous, as I thought, nor disagreeable; for why should I dissemble? And in Reality it struck me.



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